

MAROOOF And MUNKAR

(Enjoining the Good and Forbidding the Evil)

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In the Name of Allah, The Most Merciful, The Most Compassionate

Preface

'Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar' (Enjoin the good and forbid the wrong), a Quranic concept, holding key to the world view and value system of Islam, is discussed at length in the present book. The discussion brings home the points about the nature of this mission of Islam - modes of its enforcement, its relevance, and the changes that it brings about in society.

With reference to the prophetic mission, a number of terms have been employed in the Qur'an, of which 'Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is the key concept. Terms other than 'Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar' lay emphasis on a particular aspect of Deen' (the Divine way of Life). Nonetheless the underlying spirit is the same.

The importance of Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar', as is evident from even a cursory glance at the Qur'an and Hadith, can hardly be overlooked. Not only is it a characteristic of the Muslims but it also protects them from ruin.

There are, however, a number of questions about the nature and scope of this duty, for example, whether it is incumbent on all Muslims or on a few. Is it to be performed among Muslims alone? The book attempts at providing answers to the questions related to the nature, scope, prerequisites, and conditions and regulations of 'Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. Many Qur'anic

verses dealing with 'Amr bi al-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar' bring out the details about the nature, scope and conditions of 'Amr bi al Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. Of these verses and 'Ahadith', the more explicit ones have been quoted to adduce points. Since many points discussed in different chapters are recurrent and inter-related, the reader is therefore requested to study the book as a whole. Closely related to 'Amr bi al-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar', is the concept of 'Dawat Ila al-Khair' (Calling others to all that is good), as referred to in the Qur'an. A brief discussion on this concept made in the first chapter, would help one appreciate well the concept of 'Amr bi al-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. Mine is not a scholastic approach. I have tried to compile the directives made by Allah and the Prophet (P.B.U.H.) for the benefit of those who believe in the Book and Sunnah; without calling anything into question. The divergence of opinion about the interpretation of certain Quranic concepts is a healthy sign subject to the condition that interpretation is made in terms of reference that are not contrary to the spirit of the Quran and Sunnah. For, any viewpoint contrary to the spirit of the Qur'an cannot be acceptable. The interpretation must be in line with the purport of the Qur'an. I have tried to examine all issues related to this concept, including the controversial ones. This should, I believe, lend authenticity to this book.

Nonetheless, some mistakes might have crept into my work, which, if pointed out by readers, would be rectified without any reluctance on my part. May Allah accept my effort and make it useful for readers.

(Maulana) Jalaluddin Omari

24th Feb. 1966

Translator's Note

'Maroof and Munkar' is an eminently scholarly work, dealing with a theme which individuals and institutions cannot live without. They come across situations on a daily basis when they have to trim the sails to keep the boat of life on an even keel. A word of advice has to be tendered here and a hand raised in anger has to be restrained there; a lamentation over lethargy is heard here and the erosion of values is bemoaned there; a sense of duty has to be aroused here and the voice of conscience has to be made compelling there. The sorry state of affairs prevailing ubiquitously makes the need of this book pressing and the demand for this book urgent.

In response to the demand for this book, the original Urdu version has gone into six editions. An Arabic version was brought out. Based on the Arabic version, a Turkish version was published. Within India, this book has been translated into Hindi, Bengali and Tamil. The book has also been published in Pakistan and has evoked a wide response.

The vast and unwieldy material available for this book has been studied and sifted, analysed in depth and presented with skill, organized systematically and communicated lucidly by Moulana Syed Jalaluddin Umari. In the process, he has drawn generously on the tall and towering scholars of Islam. His argument is thus made authentic and rendered convincing. A book reflecting such erudition and commanding such relevance poses a challenge to translators.

The first English translation of this book could not avoid certain inadequacies. After editing and amending the first three chapters extensively, it was felt that a full-fledged translation was called for and so the rest of the book was translated anew. After all, translation is not epitomisation. Giving a gist of the excerpts

runs the risk of distortion or focus shift. To be fair to the author and to the authors he quotes, translation should pursue the text as closely as possible, so that the genuine voice of the author is neither stifled nor marginalised. The translator should remain unobtrusive and self-effacing. With this aim in view, the second translation is being offered. A slight improvement on the first version may justify the effort. The translator, however, is aware that the scope for improvement remains wide.

Usman Muhammad Iqbal

CHAPTER I

Calling others to All that is Good**Injunction for calling others to all that is good**

In the Surah, "The House of Imran" occurs this divine Command addressed to the Believers:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (آل عمران: ١٠٤)

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong: They are the ones to attain felicity. (3:104)

The above verse is preceded by a reference to the Jews who have rejected the true religion and who keep themselves busy in dissuading others from accepting it. That is the reason for their privation of guidance and for their falling out of God's favour. Muslims have been, therefore, asked to attain piety and adhere to the tenets of Islam till their last breath. They have been also asked to unite against evil forces and be not divided among themselves.

These commandments relate to their personal lives. Then an interpersonal agenda is given. They have been directed to invite mankind to all that is good and to enjoin good acts and forbid all wrong acts. The point under discussion has been elaborated by Imam Razi's remark quoted below:

إِعلم أنه تعالى في الآيات المتقدمة عاب أهل الكتاب على
شيئين، أحدهما أنه عابهم على الكفر ... ثم بعد ذلك عابهم

على سعيهم في إلقاء الغير في الكفر ... فلما انتقل منه إلى
مخاطبة المؤمنين أمرهم أولاً بالتقوى والإيمان... ثم أمرهم
بالسعى في إلقاء الغير في الإيمان والطاعة .

God had condemned the people of the Book on two grounds in the preceding verses. First, they have been censured for their transgression. Moreover, they have been castigated for their act of misleading others... Muslims have been first asked to attain faith and piety. ...Then they have been directed to bring others into the fold of Islam and of faith and submission."

(Mafatih al-Ghayb (al-Tafseer-al-Kabeer) Vol. 3, P. 19.)

According to Syed Mohammad Alusi:

أمرهم سبحانه بتكميل الغير. اثر أمرهم بتكميل النفس
ليكونوا هادين مهدين على ضد أعدائهم. فإن ما قص الله
تعالى من مالهم في ما سبق يدل على أنهم ضالون مضلون.

God has directed Muslims to work for the perfection of others after having attained perfection. Thus, contrary to the Jews, they will be not only themselves righteous but will act also as the guides for others. For, according to God, as discussed in the preceding 'verses, Jews are transgressors and entice others to transgression.

(Ruh al-Ma'ani Part: IV, p. 20)

Two epithets have been used in the above verse with reference to the duty required of the Muslim community:

- (i) Calling others to all that is good: (Dawat ilal Khair)
- (ii) Enjoining what is right, and forbidding what is wrong:
(Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar)

Their Meaning and Connotations

Take "calling others to all that is good" first. "Good" implies the religion of God delivered by the Prophet Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). "Good" in its wider context embraces the whole Islamic value-system, its beliefs and ideas, and its political, ethical and liturgical principles. It is the duty of the Muslim Community to invite mankind to this "good". All that has been prescribed by Islam is good and what has been forbidden is evil. For Muslims this should be the only ideal of life, because all other systems or ways of life can neither interest him nor can he propagate them. Muslims should devote themselves to establish this way of life and root out all other systems; which in his view symbolise the antithesis of Islam. 'Calling others to all that is good' stands for the message of Islam in its totality. Any effort lacking in this essential prerequisite cannot be a substitute for this duty. If the invitation is confined to a certain department of life, as for example, morals or politics, rituals or interpersonal relations, it will not and cannot serve the purpose. Such an attempt is no doubt commendable for being good in spirit, yet it is partial in nature. Muslims have been asked to do it fully, not partially, as is evident from many Quranic statements.

An instance in point is the verse dealing with the righteousness of Abraham, Issac and Jacob:

وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ فِعْلَ الْخَيْرَاتِ
وَإِقَامَ الصَّلَاةِ وَإِيتَاءَ الزَّكَاةِ وَكَانُوا لَنَا عَابِدِينَ ﴿٧٥﴾ (الانباء: ٧٥)

And We made them Leaders, guiding (men) by Our command, and We sent them inspiration to do good deeds, to establish regular prayers, and

to practice regular charity and they constantly served Us (and Us only). (XXI:73)

In the above verse the phrase "to do good deeds" is used for actions done by the Prophets in accordance with the directive of God. Its scope is doubtless vast, including the worship, dealings and morals which is known also as the religion or the Shariah. This makes it plain that "to do good deeds" has been the chief function of prophets and that they lived according to their shariah. Allama Baghwi has commented thus on this verse:

(وَجَعَلْنَاهُمْ أَئِمَّةً يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا) يقتدي بهم في الخيرات
(يَهْدُونَ بِأَمْرِنَا) يدعون الناس إلى ديننا (وَأَوْحَيْنَا إِلَيْهِمْ
فَعَلِ الْخَيْرَاتِ) يعني العمل بالشرائع:

"We made them leaders and they guided men by Our commands. In other words, in all good acts the prophets were followed. That they guided men by Our commands implies that these prophets invited people to the religion. That "We sent them inspiration to do good deeds" means that the command has been given to follow the way of the prophets. (M'alimal-Tanzil Vol. IV, p. 245)

The commentator Khazin has explained 'good deeds' as deeds performed in accordance with shariah.

(Lubab al-Tawil Fil Maani al-Tanzil, Vol. IV, p. 245.)

To do good acts is thus to follow His Command. The prophets were asked to follow and preach it and they were, therefore, true embodiments of this quality. This certainly helped them attain perfection and thus endeared them to God.

To appreciate the real meaning of goodness (Khair)

another instance is a verse occurring in the Sura "Maida". Reference has been made in the verse to the diversity of Shariahs.

Nonetheless, the divine message has remained consistent. The rules of practical conduct have, however, been different, in varying degrees, in accordance with the milieu of a given age. This accounts for the different laws ordained by Moses and by Muhammad (p.b.u.h.). Though rules and laws may take different forms among different peoples, the underlying spirit has remained the same. What is required thus of a believer is to adhere to the laws ordained by the Prophet. Those unwilling to follow them (and renounce the preceding Shariah) are disobedient to God.

لِكُلِّ جَعَلْنَا مِنْكُمْ شُرْعَةً وَمِنْهَا جَا... فَاسْتَبِقُوا الْخَيْرَاتِ
(المائدة: ٣٨)

To each among you have We prescribed a law and an Open Way. So strive as a race in all virtues. (V:48)

What is implied by "strive as a race in all virtues" is to follow the way of life recommended by the Prophet. This Qur'anic phrase has been interpreted by Ibn Kathir thus:

وهي طاعة الله واتباع شرعه الذي جعله ناسخاً لما قبله
والتصديق بكتابه القرآن الذي هو آخر كتاب أنزله.

It stands for obeying Allah and His Shariah which has nullified the preceding Shariahs and for affirming His Book, the Qur'an, the last Revealed Book.

(Tafseer Qur'an al-Azeem, Vol. II, p. 67)

In Allama Alusi's words:

فسارعوا إلى ما هو خير لكم في الدارين من العقائد

الحقة والأعمال الصالحة المندرجة في القرآن الكريم.

One should make it a point to follow all Quranic directives, for this alone ensures the best of both the worlds. (Ruh al-Maani, Part VI, p.104)

According to Allama Nizamuddin Qummi Nishapuri.

يعنى بالخيرات ههنا ما هو الحق من الاعتقادات والمحقق من التكليف.

'Khairat' here implies the truest beliefs and the well-established deeds that men are ordained to perform.

(Gharaib al-Qur'an Wa Raghaib al-Furqan Vol. VI, p.135)

In the light of above explications of the term "khairat" it is clear that the term is synonymous with obedience to Allah and to His prophet and with a readiness to follow the 'Shariah'. This term sums up the entire way of life as ordained in the Qur'an. Muslims have been asked to invite others to this "goodness".

How have the Prophet, His companions, their followers and the exegetes interpreted the verse on Dawat-e-Khair?

The Prophet's Version

On reciting the verse, "Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good", the Prophet, as reported by Abu Jafar Baaqar, remarked that the adherence to the Qur'an and to his tradition amounts to doing good. (Fath al-Qadir Vol. I, p.338) The invitation to all that is good, therefore, constitutes the invitation to follow the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Any invitation lacking in this fundamental prerequisite cannot serve the purpose. Nor

will it be an invitation to 'do all that is good' in the real sense of the term.

Classical Interpretation

The interpretations of 'Khair' (good) by classical authorities adduced below are reported by Abu Hayyan Andalusi.

الخير هو الإسلام، قاله مقاتل، أو العمل بطاعة الله، قاله أبو سليمان الدمشقي أو الجهاد والإسلام.

"Good", in Muqatil's view, stands for, Islam. It underlies, according to Abu Sulayman of Damascus, obedience to Allah or it bears the implication of both Jihad and Islam.

(al-Bahr al-Muheet, Vol. III, p. 20)

For Allama Baghwi "goodness" is synonymous with Islam. (Malimal-Tanzil, Vol. I, p. 334) The same view is incorporated into "Jalalain". However, one should not lose sight of the fact that the obedience to Allah must be in every respect and this lies also at the core of the directive for "inviting others to all that is good". In his gloss on "Jalalain" Allama Sawi makes this apt point:

إنما قصره عليه لأنه رأس الأمور.

Islam being the fundamental concept has been regarded as synonymous with "goodness" in Jalalain. (Sawi's annotation on Jalalain, Vol. I, p. 152)

Imam Ibn Jareer Tabari, the classical exegete, offers the following interpretation:

ولتكن منكم أيها المؤمنون أمة، يقول جماعة يدعون الناس إلى الخير يعني إلى الإسلام وشرائعه التي شرعها الله لعباده.

O Believers! let there arise out of you a band of people inviting others to all that is good.

"Goodness" amounts to Islam and 'Shariah' ordained' for all by Allah. (Jamey al-Bayan, Vol. IV, p.24)

According to Allama Abu Hayyan Andalusi,

الدعاء إلى الخير وهو عام في التكليف من الأفعال والتروك.

"Inviting to all that is good" is of a general purport and includes the enjoining of right and forbidding of wrong as ordained in the Law.

(al-Baharul Muheet, Vol. III, p.20)

Qazi Baizawi comments thus:

الدعاء إلى الخير يعم الدعاء إلى ما فيه صلاح ديني و دنيوي.

"Inviting to all that is good" being of a general purport implies an invitation to all that ensures the best of both the worlds.

(Anwar al-Tanzil Vol.I, p. 149)

In line with this, are the opinions expressed by Shaykh Abu al-Saud and Allama Syed Mahmood Alusi. That such an invitation should be made, is corroborated by both the Qur'an and the Sunnah. What is required by this invitation ensures the best of both the worlds. Likewise, all other invitations lacking in its spirit are contrary to Islam and bring about disaster, this has been the consistent view of all classical exegetes. The Qur'an and the Sunnah, as pointed out by Shaykh Ismail Haqqi, require this duty of believers:

(وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ) جماعة داعية إلى الخير

أى إلى ما فيه صلاح ديني و دنيوي فالدعاء إلى الخير عام في التكليف من الأفعال والتروك.

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good calls for a body of believers engaged in this duty. Such an invitation stands for the preaching that ensures the best of both the worlds, for it encompasses all such acts which are either desired or forbidden.

(Ruh al-Bayan Vol. I, p.352)

In sum 'Dawa ilal-Khair', as corroborated by the Qur'an and the Sunnah and as interpreted by classical exegetes, is synonymous with Islam. What is required by this directive, is not a mere verbal preaching of Islam. Muslims can do justice to this directive only when they devote themselves heart and soul to achieve this end. In pursuance of abiding by this directive they have to strive hard and take it up as a goal of their life, in all possible ways.

CHAPTER II

Its Significance

The Invitation is the Qur'anic Term for the Prophetic Mission:

To enjoin "good" and forbid "wrong" has been the mission of the Prophets. This is the duty, according to the Qur'an, of Prophets and of their followers. The Qur'an speaks of the Prophet (p.b.u.h.) thus:

يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ (الاعراف: ١٥٤)

For he commands them what is just and forbids them what is evil: (7:157)

Luqman instructs his son to enjoin good and forbid wrong

Luqman advised his son to enjoin all that is just and forbid all that is wrong and explained to him that it calls for courage and patience, characteristics of the firm believers:

O my son! establish regular prayer enjoin what is

يَبْنِي أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ عَلَى
مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ (لقمن: ١٤)

just, and forbid what is wrong: And bear with patient constancy whatever betide thee; for this is firmness (of purpose) in (the conduct of) affairs.

(xxx:17)

Though Luqman was not a prophet, he was certainly one of the righteous. Reference to his advice does not aim at throwing light on his excellent character but at persuading the believers to follow this advice. As pointed

out by Jassas:

إنما حكى الله تعالى لنا ذلك عن عبده لنقتدى به وننتهى إليه.

Reference has been made to his advice for making the believers assimilate and follow it.

(Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. III, p. 592)

The righteous among the people of the Book were performing this duty.

When Islam appeared, the People of the book, in general, had transgressed beyond limits. There did exist a group among them that was engaged in enjoining "good" and forbidding "wrong" and the Qur'an, approvingly makes mention of this group:

لَيْسُوا سَوَاءً ۖ مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ أُمَّةٌ قَائِمَةٌ يَتْلُونَ آيَاتِ اللَّهِ آنَاءَ
الَّيْلِ وَهُمْ يَسْجُدُونَ ۝ يُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَالْيَوْمِ الْآخِرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْخَيْرَاتِ ۖ
وَأُولَٰئِكَ مِنَ الصَّالِحِينَ ۝ (آل عمران: ١١٣-١١٤)

Not all of them are alike: Of the People of the Book are a portion that stand (for the right) ; they rehearse the Signs of God all night long, And they prostrate themselves in adoration. They believe in God and the Last Day; They enjoin what is right. And forbid what is wrong; And they hasten (in emulation), in (all) good works: They are in the ranks of the righteous. (III: 113-114)

The Call termed as the Prophetic Mission

The Qur'anic verse, quoted above, explains the fact that such a call constitutes the spirit of prophetic

missions. As already indicated, it represents Islam in its entirety. For the prophets it was the foremost duty to enjoin good and forbid wrong. The above verse thus provides some insights into the nature and scope of the mission of prophets. This contention is testified by the views of the following classical authorities. In Imam Ibn Taymiya's view:

الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر الذي أنزل الله به كتيبه
وارسل به رسله من الدين.

Allah sent down revelation and Books and prophets and made it incumbent on them to enjoin good and forbid wrong. This is one of the constituents of the religion. (Al-Hisba fi al-Islam p.63)

According to Allama Qurtubi:

إن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر كانا واجبين في الأمم
المتقدمة، وهو فائدة الرسالة وخلافة النبوة.

The people of the Book were entrusted with the duty of calling to good and forbidding wrong. In it lies the significance of the prophethood and this entitles the Ummah to be the Prophet's successor. (Al-Jameyli Ahkam al-Quran, Vol. VI, p.47)

Allama Saifuddin Aamdi has commented thus:

مامن أمة إلا وقد أمرت بالمعروف كاتباع أنبيائهم وشرائعهم،
ونهت عن المنكر كنهيههم عن الإلحاد وتكذيب أنبيائهم.

The call to good has been the duty of all religious communities down the ages. For instance, their efforts to ask others to follow the message of prophets. So did they forbid all that was wrong.

An instance in point is their opposition to atheism and transgression.

(Al-Ihkam Fi Usul al-Ahkam, Vol. I, p. 308)

In Imam Razi's view:

الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر والإيمان بالله، إن هذه الصفات الثلاثة كانت حاصلة في سائر الأمم.

The three articles of faith with the people of the Books were; calling to good, forbidding wrong and faith in Allah. (Mafatih al-Ghaib, Vol. III, P.27)

According to Allama Rashid Raza:

قد جرت سنة الأنبياء والسلف الصالحين على الدعوة إلى الخير والأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر، وإن كان محفوفاً بالمكروه والمخاوف

This has been the tradition of all Prophets and the righteous to call others to good and forbid wrong, though this duty is arduous.

(Tafseer al Qur'an, (Al-Manar) Vol. IV, P.32)

The Call is the Duty of Muslims

In the light of comments of classical authorities quoted above, the fact emerges that this call has been an essential duty of Prophets and their followers in every age. Muslims are not supposed to lead only a life of piety and righteousness. They have to invite whole mankind to all that is good and forbid wrong. A Muslim has to play the role of both a leader and a worshipper. In addition to his submission to God and offering prayers attendant upon it, he has to guide mankind also.

Any lapse in anyone of the two duties will render him

answerable on the Day of Judgement. The following Qur'anic verse deserves the attention of Muslims:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ ط
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

Ye are the best of Peoples evolved for mankind
enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong,
and believing in Allah. (3:110)

The Muslim Ummah has been termed, in the Qur'an, "the best of peoples" marked by the two characteristics. First, the Ummah enjoins what is right and forbids what is wrong. Next, it believes in Allah. The belief in Allah amounts to total submission to His will: One can gain the firmness of faith by adhering strictly to His will. "The belief in Allah" (Iman bi Allah) has been explained by Khazin, an exegete, thus:

(وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ) أَيِ وَتَصَدِّقُونَ بِاللَّهِ وَتَخْلُصُونَ لَهُ التَّوْحِيدَ
وَالْعِبَادَةَ.

"You believe in Allah" means an affirmation of His
Existence, and a total submission to Him.

(Lubab al-Tawil Fi Maania-Tanzil, Vol. I P. 399)

That Muslims are "the best of peoples" bears the implication that they will lead mankind to the right path and will themselves be obedient to Him. These two duties entrusted to the Muslim Ummah make it the supreme community. It lends the Ummah something of prophets' spirit and the community imbued with the spirit of prophets is doubtless supreme. In his explication of the above quoted Qur'anic verse Allama Sawi says:

هذه الأمة لها شبه بالأنبياء من حيث إنها مهتدية في نفسها
هادية لغيرها!

The above verse makes the Ummah resemble prophets. Like prophets Muslims are not only the divinely guided, but also guides of others.

(Hashia al-Sawi Ala Tafseer al-Jalalain, Vol. I, P.153)

The distinguishing characteristics of "the best community" are thus: enjoining good and forbidding wrong and the belief in and obedience to Allah. If these characteristics are lost, the stature will be lost too. No distinction will remain between this community and other communities. Hazrat Omar recited the above quoted Qur'anic verse on the occasion of the Haj pilgrimage and remarked:

يَأْتِيهَا النَّاسُ. مَنْ سَرَّهَ أَنْ يَكُونَ مِنْ تِلْكَ الْأُمَّةِ فَلْيُؤَدِ شَرْطَ
اللَّهِ مِنْهَا.

Those willing to be within the fold of "the best community" should first fulfill the requirements demanded of them by Allah.

Mujahid records the following observation on the verse:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ النَّاسِ لِلنَّاسِ عَلَى هَذَا الشَّرْطِ أَنْ تَأْمُرُوا
بِالمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُوا بِاللَّهِ.

You are entitled to be the members of "the best community" as long as you enjoin good, forbid wrong and believe in Allah.

(Jamey al- Bayan Fi Tafseer al-Qur'an, Vol. IV, P.28)

According to Allama Qurtubi:

(تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) مدح لهذه الامة ما أقاموا ذلك واتصفوا به فإذا تركوا التغيير وتواطئوا على المنكر زال عنهم اسم المدح ولحقهم اسم الذم وكان ذلك سبباً لهلاكهم.

That "you enjoin all that is good and forbid all that is wrong" is the characteristic of Muslims, according to Allah. As long as they do it sincerely they happen to be the best community. However, if they give up the task of forbidding evil and make a compromise on it, it will deprive them of this honorific title bestowed on them by Allah and will result in condemnation and perdition.

(Al-Jamey Al-Ankam al-Qur'an, Vol. IV, P.173)

This point has been developed by Imam Razi in the legal terminology thus:

انه ثبت في أصول الفقه أن ذكر الحكم مقرونا بالوصف المناسب له يدل على كون ذلك الحكم معللاً بذلك الوصف فها هنا حكم تعالى بثبوت وصف الخيرية لهذه الامة ثم ذكر عقيبه هذا الحكم و هذه الطاعات أعني الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر والإيمان، فوجب كون تلك الخيرية معللة بهذه العبادات.

This is the established principle of Jurisprudence that certain characteristics are inalienable to a certain situation. According to Allah, Muslims are the best community on account of being engaged in enjoining good and forbidding wrong and being obedient to Allah. In consequence, these qualities are the prerequisites for this status.

(Mafatih -Al-Gaib, Vol. III, p.27)

The two duties are inseparable from the people of faith in all circumstances. A Muslim cannot be envisioned without them. A Muslim will always be equipped with the virtue of upholding the two duties.

The condition in which Allah wants to see Muslims is the condition in which they enjoin good and forbid wrong. The real faith lies in taking an initiative in taking up cudgels against all that spells wrong, and not in mere restraint from sin. Faith renders the heart impatient with kufr and shirk; faith ceases to be faith and loses its splendour if it is not ill at ease with the world bereft of divine guidance.

The Muslim Ummah has been referred to in the Qur'an as "the best community"; for it enjoins right, forbids wrong and believes in Allah. So are those people of the Book referred to as the righteous who recite the Book, worship Him, believe in Allah and in the Hereafter, and enjoin right and forbid wrong.

The above discussion helps one realise that the qualities required of the best community and the righteous for guiding mankind, are not mere personal virtues. Allama Abu Saud offers the following explanation of the term:

(وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) صفتان أخريان
 لأمة أجرين عليهما تحقيقاً لمخالفتهم اليهود في الفضائل
 المتعلقة بتكميل الغير أثر بيان مباينتهم لهم في الخصائص
 المتعلقة بتكميل النفس، وتعرضاً بمداهنتهم في الاحتساب
 بل بتعكيسهم في الأمر باضلال الناس وصلّهم عن سبيل الله
 فإنه أمر بالمنكر ونهى عن المعروف.

The two additional features of the righteous group are: they enjoin good and forbid evil. They are mentioned here so as to make it clear that the righteous group is different from the common Jews both in the matter of those qualities pertaining to the perfection of the self (Takmeel-e-nafs) and in the matter of qualities pertaining to the perfection of the non-self (takmeel-e-ghair). This is a subtle criticism of the Jews as they connive at the lapses of the people, mislead them, and prevent them from pursuing God's way. This certainly is tantamount to enjoining evil and forbidding good. (Irshad - Al-Aql at-Saleem (Tafseer-e-Abu Saud Vol. II, p.506)

According to Abu Hayyan Andalusi:

لما كملو فى أنفسهم سعوا فى تكميل غيرهم بهذين
الوصفين.

After attaining perfection they (the righteous) attempt at making others perfect by enjoining right and forbidding wrong.

(Al-Bahr at-Muheet, Vol. III, p.36)

In Luqman's advice, reference is made to "enjoining good and forbidding wrong"; along with the act of establishing prayer. The two parts of this advice indeed symbolise the state of the perfection of self and of others. Allama Syed Mahmood Alusi discusses this point thus:

(يَبْنِىْ اَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ) تكميلاً لنفسك... (وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) تكميلاً لغيرك.

"O my son! establish regular prayer" aims at

perfecting oneself whereas "enjoin what is just, and forbid what is wrong" refers to making others perfect.

(Ruh al- Maani, part 21, p.89)

Imam Razi explicates it further:

إذا أكملت نفسك بعبادة الله فكمّل غيرك فإن شغل
الأنبياء وورثتهم من العلماء هو أن يكملوا في أنفسهم
ويكملوا غيرهم.

After achieving perfection by establishing prayer they are engaged in making others perfect. This has been indeed the practice of the prophets and their successors that in addition to achieving their own perfection they help others achieve the same.

(Mafatih al Gahib, Vol. VI. P. 578)

The following verse, occurring in the Surah "Repentance" helps one appreciate the qualities embodied in the righteous:

التَّائِبُونَ الْعَابِدُونَ الْحَامِلُونَ السَّائِحُونَ الرَّاكِعُونَ السَّاجِدُونَ
الْآمِرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّاهُونَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَالْحَافِظُونَ لِحُدُودِ
اللَّهِ وَيَبْشِرُ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ ○
(التوبة: ١١٣)

"Those that turn (to God) in repentance; that serve Him. And praise Him; that wander in devotion to the Cause of God; That bow down and prostrate themselves in prayer; that enjoin good and forbid evil; and observe the limits set by God; (These do rejoice). So proclaim the glad tidings to the Believers. (IX:112)

Some of the qualities mentioned in above verse are personal such as repentance, prayer, missionary journeys, and devotion to the cause of God. What they do for the

welfare of mankind in general is termed, "enjoin good and forbid evil". In Allama Ibn Kathir's view:

ينفعون خلق الله، ويرشدونهم إلى طاعة الله بأمرهم بالمعروف ونهيهم عن المنكر مع العلم مما ينبغي فعله ويجب تركه وهو حفظ حدود الله في تحليله وتحريمه علماً وعملاً، فقاموا بعبادة الحق ونصح الحق، ولهذا قال "وَبَشِّرِ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ" لأن الإيمان يشمل هذا كله، والسعادة كل السعادة لمن اتصف به.

They help mankind and by enjoining good and forbidding wrong and lead mankind to obey God. They distinguish well between what should be done and what should not be done. This is upholding the prescribed limits. Being aware of the Law they follow it both theoretically and practically. Thus, in addition to worshipping God, they do acts of benevolence for mankind. On account of performing this role "the glad tidings" have been promised to them, for faith being an all-embracing phenomenon includes all virtues and deliverance is for those who embody these virtues. (Tafseer Ibn Kathir, Vol. II, P. 397)

This point has been summed up by Allama Syed Mahmood Alusi thus:

كانه قيل : الكاملون في انفسهم المكملون لغيرهم.

The above quoted verse indicates that they are perfect in themselves and attempt at making others perfect. (Ruh al Maani, Part II, P. 32)

For Imam Razi, to enjoin right and forbid wrong is the most arduous duty:

كل ما سبق من الصفات عبادات يأتي بها الإنسان لنفسه ولا
تعلق لشيء منها بالغير. أما النهي عن المنكر فعبادة متعلقة
بالغير... النهي عن المنكر أصعب أقسام العبادات.

The duties mentioned before the duty of enjoining good and forbidding wrong have personal scope and unrelated to others. However, forbidding evil is the call which concerns the whole mankind... To forbid wrong is the most arduous duty.

(Al-Tafseer al-Kabir, Vol. IV, P. 523)

According to Ibn Taymiya:

ومن عبادته وطاعة أمره الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
بحسب المكان.

To enjoin good and forbid wrong to the extent possible for one forms part of worship and service to God.

(Risala al-Ubudia p.9)

Allah, has, in fact, entrusted Muslims with the duty of guiding and reforming mankind and in pursuance of this aim, they have been asked to enjoin 'good' and forbid 'wrong'. This is indeed the test of one's faith to do so. This duty is doubtless prophetic in spirit and Muslims being the successors of prophets are supposed to perform it in future. If they shirk this duty, they are bound to lose their real status. As pointed out by Hazrat Hasan Basari

قال النبي ﷺ : من أمر بالمعروف ونهى عن المنكر فهو
خليفة الله في أرضه وخليفة رسوله وخليفة كتابه.

The Prophet (may Allah bless and greet him) said that one enjoining good and forbidding wrong is the vicegerent of God, of the Prophet and of the Book.

(Al-Jami li Ahkam al-Qur'an Vol.4, p.74)

Importance of the Call is Corroborated by Ahadith:

In consonance with the above quoted Qur'anic verses, are a number of sayings of the Prophet which throw light on the importance of this 'call to all that is good' and forbidding all that is wrong, for it is held next in importance to such supreme virtues, as piety, rights of relatives and knowledge of religion. A true believer is not only pious and virtuous but also a preacher inviting mankind to all that is good. This is, according to the prophet, one of fundamental duties. Anyone found negligent of this duty is not an ideal member of the community. Above all, the Prophet not only insisted on performing this duty but also warned of incurring God's displeasure consequent upon neglecting this duty. As reported by Durrah daughter of Abi Lahab:

قام رجل إلى النبي ﷺ وهو على المنبر فقال: يا رسول الله،
أي الناس خير؟ فقال ﷺ: خير الناس أقرأهم وأتقاهم وأمر
هم بالمعروف وأنهاهم عن المنكر وأوصلهم الرحم

Once while the Prophet was delivering a sermon on the pulpit, someone asked him, "O Messenger of Allah, who is the best man?" The Prophet told him that he is the best who is most pious, recites the Book frequently and takes a keen interest in enjoining good and forbidding wrong, and maintains the family solidarity.

(Musnad Ahmad, Vol. VI, P. 432)

On the authority of Abu Huraira, the Prophet is reported to have remarked:

الإسلام أن تعبد الله لا تشرك به شيئاً، وتقيم الصلاة، وتؤتي
الزكاة، وتصوم رمضان، وتحج البيت، والأمر بالمعروف

والنهي عن المنكر، وتسليمك على اهلك، فمن انتقص شيئاً منهم فهو سهم من الإسلام يدعه، ومن تركهن كلهن فقد ولي الإسلام ظهره.

Islam implies obedience to Allah, avoiding 'Shirk', establishment of prayers, performance of Haj, fasts and Zakah, call to enjoin all that is good and forbid all that is wrong and saluting the family. One who reduces or neglects anyone of the above duties is guilty of leaving a part of Islam and if he neglects all of them, it amounts to apostasy. (Hakim, Vol. I, p. 21)

According to Hazrat Abdullah b. Abbas, the Prophet once remarked:

ليس منا من لم يرحم صغيرنا، ويوقر كبيرنا ويأمر بالمعروف وينه عن المنكر.

He is not one of us who has no affection for the young and no respect for the old and who does not enjoin good and forbid wrong.

(al-Targheebwa al-Tarhib, Vo. IV, P.12)

On the authority of Hazrat Huzaifa it is reported:

والذي نفسي بيده لتأمرن بالمعروف ولتنهون عن المنكر أو ليوشكن الله أن يبعث عليكم عذاباً منه فتدعون فلا يستجيب لكم.

By Allah, Who is Supreme, all of you should enjoin good and forbid wrong; otherwise you will incur Allah's displeasure which is inevitable.

(Tirmizi Abwab al-Fitan:)

As reported by Hazrat Jabir,

قال رسول الله ﷺ: "أوحى الله عز جل إلى جبرئيل عليه السلام أن اقلب مدينة كذا وكذا بأهلها، فقال يارب إن فيهم عبدك فلانألم يعصك طرفة عين قال: قلبها عليه، فإن وجهه لم يتمعر في ساعة فقط.

The Prophet told once Allah asked Jibrail to destroy a certain town. Jibrail pleaded for a pious resident of the town. But Allah asked Jibrail to destroy the town including the pious man, for (despite his piety) his face did not show displeasure even for a moment at the amoral social behaviour. (Baihaqi, chapter on Iman; Mishkatul Masabih, Kitabul Adab)

Consensus on the Significance of the Call

Islamists, be they classical or modern, unanimously consider the call as fundamental to Islam and regard it as an essential duty. For Zahhak:

الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر فريضة من فرائض
الله كتبها الله على المؤمنين

The call to enjoin good and forbid wrong is one of the essential duties of Muslims.

(Fathul Qadeer, Vol. II, P.363)

Imam Ghazali comments on this duty in his work thus:

الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر هو القطب الأعظم في الدين وهو المهمة التي ابتعث الله لها النبيين أجمعين، ولوطوى بساطه وأهمل علمه وعمله لتعطل النبوة

وأضمحلت الديانة، وعمت الفترة، وفشت الضلالة وشاعت
الجهالة، واستسرى الفساد، واتسع الخرق، وخربت البلاد،
وهلك العباد، ولم يشعروا بالهلاك إلا يوم التداد، وقد كان
الذي خفنا أن يكون فإننا الله وإنا إليه راجعون، إذ قد أندرس
من هذا القطب عمله وعلمه، وانمحق بالكلية حقيقته
ورسمه، فاستولت على القلوب مدهانة الخلق، وانمححت
عنها مراقبة الخالق، واسترسل الناس في اتباع الهوى
والشهوات استرسال البهائم. وعز على بساط الأرض مؤمن
صادق لا تأخذه في الله لومة لائم. فمن سعى في تلافى هذه
الفترة. وسد هذه الثلمة، إما متكفلاً بعلمها أو متقلداً
لتفنيها، مجدداً لهذه السنة الدائرة، ناهضاً بأعبائها،
ومتشسماً في إحيائها كان مستأثراً من بين الخلق بإحياء
سنة أفضى الزمان إلى إمامتها، ومستبدأ بقربة تتضائل درجات
القرب دون ذروتها.

The call to enjoin good and forbid wrong is a most towering pillar of Islam. Prophets have been sent down the millennia to perform this duty. Without this duty the mission of Prophets becomes meaningless and soulless. Any lapse in performing this duty results in the spread of irreligion, ignorance, corruption, anarchy and devastation in general. People will die but they will not be aware of their destruction before the Doomsday. Alas! what was feared has come to pass. To Allah we belong and unto Him we return. Decay has set in the foundation of Islam. The image of Islam, therefore, looks today distorted

both outwardly and inwardly. Guided as they are by worldliness and goaded by indifference to God, Muslims have become subservient to passions hence they are no better than wild beasts. Rare are such Muslims who, ignoring criticism, have devoted themselves exclusively to God. Therefore, one who tries to put an end to this sad state of affairs, to plug the hole, to accept the responsibility of spreading the message or of implementing it, to revive the sagging spirit of sunnah, to bear its burden, and one who gets ready to give the failing and fading sunnah a new lease of life. is the best person on the earth He is to be credited for the revival of real Islam. One who enjoins good and forbids wrong will restore the religion to its right place. In so doing one will become the favourite of God.

The above introductory note is followed by the chapter on "The Call to all that is good and forbid wrong":

الباب الأول في وجوب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
وفضيلته والمزمة في إهماله وإضاعته. ويدل على ذلك بعد
إجماع الأمة عليه، وأشارات العقول السليمة إليه، الآيات
والأخبار والآثار

The first chapter deals with the significance and importance of the Call to all that is good. It discusses also the repercussions attendant upon the negligence of this duty. To adduce the point are quoted the Qur'anic verses, sayings of the Prophet, consensus of the community and views of the companions of the Prophet.

(Ihya Uloom al-Din, Vol. II, P. 26929)

According to Abu Bakr Jassas,

أكد الله تعالى فرض الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر في مواضع من كتابه ، وبينه رسول الله ﷺ في أخبار متواترة عنه فيه، وأجمع السلف وفقهاء الأمصار على وجوبه

The Qur'an has stressed, in many places, the significance of the call to all that is good. Likewise, the Prophet makes mention of it frequently as well as explicitly. So are the classical authorities and experts in jurisprudence of various places agreed upon its significance.

(Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. II, P. 592)

For Allama Ibn Hazm

اتفقت الأمة كلها على وجوب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر بلا خلاف من أحد منهم

This has been the consensus of the community that the call to all that is good is Wajib. There is no divergence of opinion about it.

(Al-Fisal fi, al-Milal wa, al - Ahwa wa, al-Nihal)

Imam Nauwi holds

قد تطابق على وجوب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر الكتاب والسنة واجماع الأمة. وهو أيضاً من النصيحة التي هي الدين

The Book, Sunnah and classical authorities on Islam all bear testimony to the significance of 'the duty of the call to enjoin good and forbid wrong. Religion stands for benevolence and this call is a part of this benevolence.

(Sharahul Muslim, Vol. I P. 51)

Imam Shawkani explicates the point thus:

وجوبه ثابت بالكتاب والسنة، وهو من أعظم واجبات

الشريعة، وأصل عظيم من أصولها، وركن مشيد من أركانها
وبه يكمل نظامها ويرتفع سنامها

The significance of enjoining good and forbidding wrong is testified by both the (Qur'an and Sunnah. It being one of the essentials of the religion is like a pillar on which rests the high edifice of religion. It gives finishing touches to the system of Shariah and elevates its pinnacle further.

(Fatah al- Qadeer, Vol. I, P.337)

It is thus clear that this call is the collective duty of the community. The Islamic state owns the responsibility of performing this duty. This call, as pointed out by Imam Ibn Taiymiya, is the spirit of Islam and the offenders are to be punished by the state through war:

كل طائفة خرجت عن شريعة من شرائع الإسلام الظاهرة المتواترة فإنه يجب قتالها بإتفاق أئمة المسلمين. وإن تكلمت لشهادتين. فإذا أقرروا بالشهادتين وامتنعوا عن الصلوات الخمس وجب قتالهم حتى يصلوا... وكذلك إن امتنعوا عن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر وجهاد الكفار إلى أن يسلموا أو يؤدوا الجزية عن يدهم صاغرون.

Any section of the community found neglecting any of the essential duties, according to the consensus of ummah, is to be punished through war. Even those who believe in Allah and in prophethood yet fail to establish prayers five times a day are to be checked and should be asked to establish prayers. Similarly those neglecting the call to enjoin good and forbid wrong, and making compromises with non-Muslims are to be punished through war.

(Majmua Fatawa Ibn Taiymiya, Vol. IV, p. 181)

Real Meaning of a Qur'anic Verse

The explication of a Qur'anic verse in this context, will not be totally out of place. This verse occurs in the Surah Maida:

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا عَلَيْكُمْ أَنْفُسَكُمْ لَا يَضُرُّكُمْ مَنْ ضَلَّ
إِذَا هَدَيْتُمْ (المائدة: ١٠٥)

O ye who believe: Guard your own souls: if ye follow (right) guidance, no hurt can come to you from those who stray. (V 105)

The import of the above verse may appear to negate the obligatory nature of the call to enjoin 'good' and forbid 'wrong'. It looks as if Islam asks the believers to take care of and purify themselves alone. However, the exegetes unanimously reject such an interpretation because it is at variance with innumerable and clear assertions of the Qur'an and Sunnah. The fact of the matter is that in this verse, there is a consolation for the believers who remained steadfast in the social conditions of disbelief and polytheism and continued to perform dawah; that if their resolve remained firm and they clung tenaciously to Islam without the slightest deviation, the hostile forces would definitely cause them no harm. There is no hint here that even if they give up the duty of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, their success is well-assured. According to some exegetes; to follow right guidance includes the call to enjoin 'good' and forbid 'wrong'. Man remains on the straight path as long as he is involved in the twin duties of self-reform and reform of others. If he concentrates on self-reform only, he may attain righteousness but the neglect of the duty of reforming others sends him astray. This is not just a

matter of subtle perception. This view indeed sums up the spirit of Islam. Zamakh-shari comments on the above verse thus:

ليس المراد ترك الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر، فإن
من تركهما مع القدرة عليهما فليس بمهتد، وإنما هو بعض
الضلال الذين فصلت الآية بينهم وبينه

It does not imply that the call to enjoin good is to be shirked. For he is not among the guided who does not perform this duty, though he is in a position to do so. Instead, he is among those misguided who have been kept wide apart from Amr bil maroof and Nahi anil Munkar by this verse.

(Al-Kashshaf Vol. I, P. 386)

According to Allama Abu Saud

ولا يتوهم أن فيه رخصة في ترك الأمر بالمعروف والنهي
عن المنكر مع استطاعتهما. كيف لا ومن جملة الاهتداء أن
ينكر على المنكر حسبما تفي به الطاقة.

Let no one entertain the idea that it is permissible to renounce the duty of promoting goodness and eliminating evil in spite of one's ability to do so. Such an idea cannot but be erroneous when the condition of being guided aright includes the right to censure evil to the best of one's ability.

(Irshad al-Aql al-Saleem Vol.4, p.199-200)

So does Jassas remark:

ومن الاهتداء اتباع أمر الله في انفسنا وفي غيرنا فلا دلالة فيها
إذا على سقوط فرض الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

The guided believer is one who has to obey God

in matters pertaining to one's self and others.
The above Qur'anic verse does not at all negate
the duty of enjoining good and forbidding wrong.

(Ahkam Al Qur'an Vol. II P. 592)

In one of his sermons the Caliph Abu Bakar chided those who cited the verse to be an excuse for shirking the duty. For him the above verse indeed reiterates the significance of this duty. (Jami al-Bayan fi Tafseer al-Qur'an Part:7, p.60) He is also reported to have remarked, in another place, that the verse is quoted out of context for the Prophet himself says:

إِن النَّاسَ إِذَا رَأَوْا الْمُنْكَرَ بَيْنَهُمْ فَلَمْ يُكْرِهُوا يَرْشُكْ أَنْ يَعْمَهُمُ
اللَّهُ بِعِقَابِهِ

At a time when people become indifferent to and tolerate the spread of evil, it is possible God may send down punishment upon them all.

(Musnad Ahmad. Vol. I, P.9)

In sum, the above-quoted Qur'anic verse does not negate the significance of the duty of enjoining good and forbidding wrong. As already indicated, the verse, in fact, emphasizes the idea. In both the Qur'an and Ahadith, the duty is termed as important. This accounts for the unanimous view of classical as well as modern Islamic scholars on it. The only way to make Islam the world order, is to perform the duty; for it is demanded of us by Allah and it has been the duty of Prophets. "He that obeys Allah and His messenger, has already attained the highest achievement."(33:71)

CHAPTER-III

FARZ-E-KIFAYA OR FARZ-E-AIN?

The view that 'Amr bi al-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar', is a duty is shared by scholars of all shades of opinions. However, they differ in categorizing it under the head of 'Farz-e-Ain', for some consider it 'Farz-e-Kifaya.' A discussion on the nature of and differences in the two kinds of duty - the qualified and unqualified - will help us appreciate the point under discussion. Below is reproduced the gist of Allama Ibn Badran Hambali's discussion on this issue.

The Difference Between 'Farz-e-Kifaya' and 'Farz-e-Ain':

"Both the duties, 'Farz-e-Kifaya' and 'Farz-e-Ain' contain service to God and a social objective. Farze Kifaya makes allowance for the human psychology. With a view to obtaining the desired effect, a few out of the whole Ummah have been asked to perform a duty; the rest of the community is absolved of the duty. It is 'Farz-e-Kifaya', since the duties performed by a few Muslims serve the purpose. Contrary to it is 'Farz-e-Ain' that calls for the active involvement of the whole Ummah." (Al-Madkhal ila Mazhab Al-Imam Ahmad Hambal, PP. 103-104)

Maulana Abdul Ali Ansari writes:

المقصود من الإيجاب قد يكون إتيان المكلف بالاشتغال به
كما في الأركان الأربعة وقد يكون المقصود شيئاً آخر يجب

لأجله ما يحصل المقصود بحصوله فإذا حصل المقصود لا
يقتضى الواجب واجباً كالجهاد فإنه إنما وجب لإعلاء كلمة الله
تعالى، فإذا أتى به البعض حصل الإعلاء، وسقط الجواب.

Certain duties keep the believers engaged constantly such as the four obligatory acts-prayers, fasting, 'Haj' and 'Zakat.' While other duties aim at preparing the believers to be ready for certain acts such as the duty of 'Jihad' which is concerned with upholding and championing the cause of Allah. Such a duty performed by even a few followers serves the purpose. (Fawatih al- Rahmut Bi Sharh Musallam Al-Suboot, Vol. I, p.63)

'Farz-e-kifaya' Incumbent on all-or-on a few?

All scholars agree on the above account of the difference between 'Farz-e-Kifaya' and 'Farz-e-Ain'. Nonetheless, the point whether 'Farz-e-Kifaya' is incumbent on all or on a few is controversial. So is the question whether the performance of 'Farz-e-Kifaya' by a few believers exonerates others from performing the same. Most of the scholars subscribe to the former view. Imam Razi, Allama Ibn Subaki and Imam Shatabi, however, interpret it otherwise. Similarly, controversial is the question: who is to perform Farz-e-Kifaya? Those who have to perform 'Farz-e-Kifaya', in Ibn Subaki's view, are not some specified persons. God knows them well. Nonetheless, the performance of 'Farz-e-Kifaya' by either some particular persons or commoners exonerates others from doing it. Some scholars insist that only those entrusted with this responsibility ought to perform

'Farz-e-Kifaya'. (Jama al-Jawamey Vol. I, p.186-187) Only those capable of so doing, according to Imam Shatabi, should perform it.

Consensus on 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi An -Il :Munkar' as Farz-e-Kifaya:

There is consensus on the view that 'Amr hi al-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. happens to be Farz-e-Kifaya. Some categorize it under the head of 'Farz-e-Ain'. For Syed Mahmood Aalusi,

إن العلماء اتفقوا على أن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
من فروض الكفاية، ولم يخالف ذلك إلا النزر.

Scholars, with occasional voices of dissent, hold that 'Amr bi al-MarooF wa Nahi Anal-Munkar' is 'Farz-e-Kifaya' (Ruh Al-Maani, Part. IV, p.21)

It is to be borne in mind that, among the majority of scholars, there are those who hold the opinion that Farze Kifaya is binding on all and yet, if a few perform it, it suffices for the rest and there are others too who assert that Farz-e-Kifaya applies to a few only.

Majority's viewpoint- First proof:

In sum, majority of scholars believe it to be Farz-e-Kifaya' on the following grounds. First, these Qur'anic verses are adduced:

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ (آل عمران: ١٠٤)

Let there arise out of you a band of people inviting to all that is good, enjoining what is right. and forbidding what is wrong: (III : 104)

كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ
(آل عمران: ١١٠)

Ye are the best of people, evolved for mankind,
enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong
(III: 110)

The above Qur'anic verses, Ibn al- Arabi Maliki holds, describe 'Amr bi al-MarooF wa Nahi an Al-Munkar' as 'Farz-e-Kifaya. (Ahkam al-Qur'an Vol. 1, p.122) A band of people, according to the Qur'an, should devote itself to enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. It, however, appears in the light of the other Qur'anic verse that the whole Ummah should perform this duty. One may thus legitimately infer that the duty falls under the category of 'Farz-e-Kifaya' and its performance by a few believers exonerates others.

Most of the exegetes are of the view that it is Farz-e-Kifaya' which ought to be performed by a few. They base their view on the use of the preposition 'Min' in 3:104. Of this viewpoint Zamakhshari and Bayzawi are the exponents:

من للتبعض، لأن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر من
فروض الكفاية

(The word "min" is used for 'Tabaez', meaning 'some group among you' for 'Amr al-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is included in 'Farz-e-Kifaya. (Al-Kashshaf, Vol. I, P. 224, (Calcutta). It is strange logic to conclude that the word 'mim' used here is in the sense of 'Tabeez' by assuming that 'Amr bil MarooF and Nahi anil Munkar' is Farz-e-Kifayah. The fact of the matter is that the latter assumption is itself debatable. Hence it should first be proved, by grammatical evidence that 'mim' here is for 'Tabeez')

Commenting on the above quoted Quranic verse Abu Bakr Jassas says:

وحقيقته تقتضي البعض دون البعض فدل على أنه فرض على الكفاية إذا قام به بعضهم سقط عن الباقيين

The duty of 'Amr bil-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is incumbent on a few believers, not on all. That it is 'Farz-e-Kifaya' is certain. If it is performed by some, it exonerates all others.

(Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. II, p. 35)

Imam Ghazali has elaborated the point thus:

فيها (أي الآية) بيان أنه فرض كفاية لا فرض عين، وأنه إذا قام به أمة سقط الفرض عن الآخرين إذ لم يقل: كونوا كلكم أمرين بالمعروف بل قال: ولتكن منكم، فإذا مهماقام به واحد أو جماعة سقط الحرج عن الآخرين.

The Qur'anic verse under discussion points out that 'Amr bil-Marooif wa-Nahi An al-Munkar' is 'Farz-e-Kifaya' not 'Farz-e-Ain' and of its performance by a few exonerates others from doing it, for the Qur'an makes it explicit that 'let there arise out of you a band of people'. All Muslims are not supposed to perform it. The performance by a few thus exonerates others from doing it. (Ihya Uloom al-Din Vol.2, p.269)

Second Proof

Since the performance of 'Amr bil-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is quite a task, only a few have been entrusted with the responsibility of its performance. Those who perform it should be well-versed in matters of

'Shariah' and workings of the human nature, be far-sighted, discreet and adopt individual-specific approach. It fact, only a few are blessed with such a capability. As a consequence, it tends to be 'Farz-e-Kifaya', as pointed out by Zamakhshari.

لأنه لا يصلح إلا من علم المعروف والمنكر، وكيف يرتب الأمر في إقامته، وكيف يباشر، فإن الجاهل ربما نهى عن المعروف وأمر بمنكر، و ربما عرف الحكم في مذهبه، وجهله في مذهب صاحبه فنهاه عن غير منكر، وقد يغفل في موضع اللين ويلين في موضع الغلظة، وينكر على من لا يزيد إنكاره إلا تمادياً أو على من الإنكار عليه عبث

Only a few are capable of performing 'Amr al-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar, for it requires the knowledge of the best way to perform it. Those ignorant might act otherwise. Its performance calls for a wide knowledge of sectarian approaches of all parties concerned. One who lacks this knowledge might compel others to act in a manner which might not be in accord with the viewpoints of others.

His actions would be thus disproportionate. His compulsion about some points might estrange others further which is contrary to the very essence of this duty and is not likely to serve any useful purpose.

(Al-Kashshaf, Vol. I, p. 224)

Argument of the Subscribers to the theory of Farz-e-Ain

Those who consider it to be 'Farz-e-Ain' interpret the Qur'anic verse otherwise. To adduce their viewpoint

reference is made to another Qur'anic verse in which also the word "min" is used for "Tabeez". (Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. II, p.35) Such an approach in the interpretation of the Qur'an is erroneous. In the light of this interpretation the translation of the verse would be, "Allah will pardon some of your sins." Whereas the standard translation is: "Allah will pardon all your sins". For the scholars subscribing to this viewpoint the Qur'anic verse (III:104) implies that the whole Ummah has as a duty to perform 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' Moreover, they do not consider knowledge to be a pre-requisite for performing this duty. Each Muslim, they insist, has a knowledge of the fundamentals of Islam pertaining to both duties and forbidden acts. One cannot think of a Muslim ignorant of these fundamental points. Any Muslim is therefore capable of performing the duty of enjoining good and forbidding wrong. Both the scholar and the layman can perform it alike. On this point Allama Abdul Qadir Audah Shaheed makes the following observation:

إن وضع واجب الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر على
عائق الجاهل لن يؤدي إلى الأضرار التي يتوقعونها لأن
الجاهل بطبيعة الحال لا يأمر ولا ينهى إلا ما هو ظاهر لا
خلاف عليه كأداء الصلاة والنهي عن السرقة والزنا

To entrust the responsibility of performing 'Amr bil MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' to the layman should not cause fear in the minds of scholars. The layman, it may be safely assumed, will enjoin and forbid acts that are too familiar such as enjoining prayers and forbidding fornication and stealing. (Al-Tashree al-Jinai al-Islami Vo. 1, p.495)

Mufti Sheikh Mohammad Abduhu regards it as 'Farz-e-Ain' in the light of the Qur'anic verse (3:104) on these grounds:

This Qur'anic address is based upon the assumption that a Muslim can never be oblivious of those duties which are compulsory for him, as he has been ordered to know the Shariah and to make a distinction between Maroof and Munkar. Moreover, Maroof, in its absolute sense, refers to those things which are (recognised as good) intuitively and rationally by one and all. Contrariwise, Munkar encompasses those things which are intuitively and rationally felt to be undesirable. To learn about it, one need not look up the annotated versions of Ibne Abideen, Fathul Qadeer and Mabsoot. A sound temperament will find in the Qur'an and the Sunnah enough material for its guidance on the subject, and this has been made possible through an uninterrupted practice down the ages. There is no possibility, legally speaking, of a Muslim remaining ignorant of the meaning of Maroof and Munkar because his identity as a Muslim is certainly based upon the knowledge of Maroof and Munkar. The people who deny that the knowledge of Maroof and Munkar is commonly shared by all Muslims seem to be under the impression that it is permissible for a Muslim to remain so ignorant as to be unaware of the difference between good and bad and of the distinction between Maroof and Munkar. It goes without saying that such an impression has no religious sanction.

(Tafseer al-Qur'an al-Hakeem (al-Manar) Vol. IV, p. 27)

The same point is elaborated at another place by him thus:

فريضة الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر أكد من فريضة

الحج، ولم يشترط فيها الاستطاعة لأنها مستطاعة دائماً

The duty of 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is, in a certain sense, more desirable than that of performing Hajj. Only those who can afford are asked to perform Hajj. However, no such prerequisite is required for this duty and it can be performed by all. (Ibid, Vol. IV, p. 35)

Included in the performance of 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' are both - the achievements of a theological genius (Mujtahid) and the dissemination of basic religious knowledge by a commoner. Both the scholar and the layman can perform it in their respective ways. For the learned, the pre-requisite is obviously a thorough knowledge of the Quran and Ahadith, whereas for a layman his familiarity with the basic postulates of Islam is sufficient. The learned can doubtless tackle the delicate issues involved in the performance of this duty. Nonetheless, even a layman can deliver persuasively the teachings of Islam. In sum, those who do not possess a thorough knowledge of Islamics cannot and should not be exempted from the performance of this duty.

Objection Against the Majority Viewpoint

Most of the scholars, as pointed out earlier, are of the view that its performance is incumbent on the whole Ummah but its performance by a few exonerates others. Since every Muslim is not capable of performing it, they are to be exonerated. This view is, however, self-contradictory. Any command of Shariah becomes obligatory upon a person only when he is deemed capable of obeying it. When this capability is missing, the command ceases to be obligatory. In the light of this

principle, this duty should not be considered as incumbent on the whole Ummah. Only those who are capable of doing are supposed to perform it. Imam Shaatibi and a host of other classical authorities hold the view discussed above. In the words of Allama Shaatibi:

إن الطلب وارد على البعض، دون البعض، كيف كان، ولكن
على من فيه اهلية القيام بذلك الفعل المطلوب، لا على
العموم جميعا.

Only a few are required to do it. Not all but those capable of doing so are to perform it. It is not, therefore, a duty incumbent on all.

In support of this contention, these writers make reference to the Qur'anic verse, which makes it plain, that a certain group is entrusted with the responsibility of performing this duty. Referring to a number of other Qur'anic verses it is pointed out:

وفي القرآن من هذا النحو أشياء كثيرة ورد الطلب فيها نصا
على البعض لا على الجميع

Many Qur'anic injunctions are addressed to a few and not to all.

(Al Muwafaqat fi usool al-Shariah, Vol. I, p.176)

Commenting on the Qur'anic verse (III : 104) Imam Razi mentions that the duty is exclusive for the scholars. Two reasons are given for it. First, a thorough knowledge is required - for its performance. Next, in his own words,

إنا أجمعنا على أن ذلك واجب على سبيل الكفاية بمعنى أنه
متى قام به البعض سقط عن الباقين، وإذا كان كذلك كان

المعنى : ليقم بذلك بعضكم فكان في الحقيقة هذا إيجاباً
على البعض ، لا على الكل

There is consensus on the view that 'Amr al-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar' happens to be 'Farz-e-Kifaya', In other words, its performance by a few exonerates all others. According to the Qur'an, a band out of the community has to perform this duty. This proves it beyond any shadow of doubt that the duty is not incumbent on all.
(Mafatih al-Ghaib, Vol. III. p. 20)

Refutation of this Objection

This view is similar to the one expressed by Imam Shaatibi who considers the duty as 'Farz-e-Kifaya' incumbent on those capable of doing so. However, those scholars who construe it as incumbent on all Muslims point out the repercussions which may arise, if it is not performed at all. The whole Ummah, they rightly hold, shall be answerable for this lapse. This in turn involves another point. If this duty is 'Farz-e-Kifaya', why should the whole Ummah be answerable in case it is not performed? (Some scholars do not share this view. In their view, only those people will be held guilty whose duty it is to perform this farz-e-kifaya and yet who do not perform it. (see Al Muwafaqat, Vol. I, p. 177))

That the Qur'an asks a few believers to perform this duty is a controversial point. Some scholars believe that the duty is incumbent on all. Reference is made in this context to 'Jihad' which, though also 'Farz-e-Kifaya' is incumbent on all, for according to the Qur'an:

كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الْقِتَالُ

"War is obligatory on you all."

As it is, the above injunction is addressed to the whole Ummah.

The Qur'an, no doubt, asks of a band of Muslims to perform this duty but it does not imply that the duty is not incumbent on the whole Ummah. The address is made in general terms as those who are to perform this duty are not specifically named. (For a detailed discussion on this point see Musallam al-Suboot, Fawatih al-Rahmoot, Vol. I, pp. 63-66 and Ruh al-Maani. Vol. IV, pp. 21-22) Nonetheless, its performance is incumbent on a few Muslims and others are therefore exonerated. For al-Bayzawi says:

خاطب الجميع، وطلب فعل بعضهم ليدل على أنه واجب
على الكل حتى لو تركوه رأساً أثموا جميعاً، ولكن يسقط
بفعل بعضهم. وهكذا كل ما هو فرض كفاية

It is addressed to all but demands of a few to perform it. It is therefore incumbent on all, for if it is not at all performed, the whole Ummah be answerable while its performance by a few exonerates all others. This principle holds true for eac ١ 'Farz-e-Kifaya'. (Anwar al-Tanzeel Vol. I, p.149)

In line with this view is the observation made by Sheikh Ismail Haqqi:

إن "من" في قوله (مِنْكُمْ) للتبعض، وتوجيه الخطاب إلى
الكل مع إسناد الدعوة إلى البعض لتحقيق معنى فرضيتها على
الكفاية، وأنها واجبة على الكل، لكن بحيث إن إقامتها البعض
سقطت عن الباقيين، ولو أخل بها الكل أثموا جميعاً لا بحيث
يتحتم على الكل إقامتها

The word "min" in the expression "min-kum" is used for "Tabeez". Though required of a few, the address is made in general terms so as to emphasise that it is 'Farz-e-Kifaya' and to emphasize that the invitation to 'Khair' is incumbent on all. So, if it is performed by a few, all others are exonerated from the duty. However, if it is not performed by anyone, the whole Ummah shall be answerable. It does not bear the implication that it is obligatory on all.

(Ruh Al-Bayan Vol. I. p. 352)

The Right Approach

Reproduced above are the two viewpoints which have given rise to a heated controversy. As it is, none of the two above discussed viewpoints is in the right direction. The right approach to this point is found only in Imam Shatibi's work, 'al-Miwafiqat Fi Usool al-Shariat', which has been commented upon by Sheikh Abdullah Daraz. Imam Shatibi, as pointed out elsewhere in the book, is of the view that this duty is incumbent on those who are capable of performing it. This contention is adduced by the Qur'anic verse (III : 104) Disagreeing with this view Sheikh Abdullah Daraz remarks:

هذه الآيات لا تدل على أن الطلب متوجه إلى البعض بل
للمانع ان يقول المعنى يجب الجميع أن ينهضوه
لذلك، ويعادوهم له، ويعاونوهم بكل الوسائل، ليتحقق هذا
المهم من المصلحة، فإن لم يحصل هذا المهم من المصلحة
أثم جميع المكلفين المتأهل وغيره

That this duty is demanded of a few is not

substantiated by the Qur'anic verses. Those subscribing to the other viewpoint hold that the duty is "Wajib" and it should be performed by a few with the assistance and co-operation of all. If it is not at all performed, both capable and incapable of performing it shall be answerable.

(al-Mawafaqat. Vo. I, p. 176)

Imam Shatibi, it is worth noting, expresses the view similar to the one held by Sheikh Abdullah Daraz in another place thus:

قد يصح أن يقال : إنه واجب على الجميع على وجه من التجوز، لأن القيام بذلك الفرض قيام بمصلحة عامة، فهم مطلوبون بسدّها على الجملة، فبعضهم هو قادر عليها مباشرة وذلك من كان أهلاً لها، والباقيون وإن لم يقدرُوا عليها. قادرون على إقامة القادرين، فمن كان قادراً على الولاية فهو مطلوب بإقامتها، ومن لا يقدر عليها مطلوب بأمر آخر وهو إقامة ذلك القادر وإجباره على القيام بها، فالقادر إذاً مطلوب بإقامة الفرض، وغير القادر مطلوب بتقديم ذلك القادر إذاً لا يتوصل إلى قيام القادر إلا بالإقامة من باب ما لا يتم الواجب إلا به، وبهذا الوجه يرتفع مناط الخلاف، فلا يبقى للمخالفة وجه ظاهر

For all intents and purposes, it might be proper to say that the task of inviting people to uphold 'Khair' is binding on all as this task in reality meets the general requirement of religion and so all are addressed to fulfil it in such a way that some are capable enough to perform it by themselves as they are competent too. The rest

may not be so capable and yet they have the strength to persuade and prepare the capable ones to execute the task. Thus, it becomes clear that the person capable of doing the job is required to act and the person not so capable is required to do another thing - that is, to put pressure upon the former to get ready to perform the job. It is required of the capable person to carry out his duty and it is required of the not-so-capable person to send the former to the frontline. When the capable person has to stand up immediately or when it is necessary to make him stand up, he should be made to spring to his feet. It is as though, the thing direly needed to complete a compulsory duty is rendered automatically and equally compulsory. In this way, the cause for controversy is eliminated, and there remains no imperative need for the controversy to continue. (al-Mawafiqat, Vol. I, pp.178-9)

The controversy whether this 'Farz-e-Kifaya' is incumbent on all or a few is resolved in the light of Imam Shatibi's interpretation. So is the other controversial aspect of this point whether it is 'Farz-e-Kifaya' or 'Farz-e-Ain' resolved. Along this line of approach Sheikh Mohammad Abduhu argues that 'Amr bil-Marooft wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is 'Farz-e-Ain'. Those believing it to be 'Farz-e-Kifaya' refer to the Quranic verse (III : 104) according to which a band of people is to perform this duty. Moreover, such writers hold that the word "min" is used for "Tabeez". For Sheikh Mohammad Abduhu, however, this duty assumes the status of Farz-e-Ain' in spite of being 'Farz-e-Kifaya'. In so doing he interprets the Qur'anic verse under discussion thus. Should the word

"min" be for "Tabeez", the verse would mean that there may arise out of you a distinguished Ummah that should invite others to do good and perform 'Amr bil-maroof wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. All believers are directed to make the selection of such an Ummah which will perform this duty. Then it should also be assumed that there are two types of duties, one incumbent on all Muslims and the other on this particular Ummah that is to invite others to good. Only a sound interpretation of the term "Ummah" can set things in the right perspective. The word "Ummah" does not stand for a Jamaat which is general in nature. The Ummah connotes, in fact, a well-knit organization that makes joint efforts for a certain cause. Muslims as a whole indeed constitute this "Ummah". It should be a collective responsibility to guide the cause of "Ummah" and point out the lapses, if any. (al-Tafseer al-Manar, Vol. IV. p. 36)

To invite others to good is, no doubt, quite a task. Nonetheless, all of us should strive for the same end. Those capable should perform it on a large scale and those lacking in the prerequisites should do it in their own limited way. Those incapable, as already submitted, should at least persuade the capable ones to perform it and should extend them all possible help. In sum, they should indirectly participate in the duty of 'Amr bil-Maroof wa Nahi An al-Munkar'

Further Clarification of this Viewpoint

Reproduced below are the viewpoints of both groups of the scholars who consider the duty of 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi An al-Munkar' as either 'Farz-e-Kifaya' or 'Farz-e-Ain'. There is consensus on the former viewpoint of which the details are as follows:

1. Even if the duty is considered as 'Farz-e-Kifaya, it is a duty incumbent on all. Those who disagree with it are guilty of a misinterpretation.

In the words of Allama Amadi:

لَا فَرْقَ عِنْدَ أَصْحَابِنَا بَيْنَ وَاجِبِ الْعَيْنِ وَالْوَاجِبِ عَلَى الْكِفَايَةِ
مِنْ جِهَةِ الْوُجُوبِ لَشُمُولِ حَدِّ الْوَاجِبِ لِهَمَا، خِلَافاً لِبَعْضِ
النَّاسِ مُصِيراً مِنْهُ إِلَى أَنَّ وَاجِبَ الْعَيْنِ لَا يَسْقُطُ بِفَعْلِ الْغَيْرِ،
بِخِلَافِ وَاجِبِ الْكِفَايَةِ، وَغَايَةِ الْاِخْتِلَافِ فِي طَرِيقِ الْإِسْقَاطِ،
وَذَلِكَ لَا يُوجِبُ الْاِخْتِلَافَ فِي الْحَقِيقَةِ.

For people sharing our views there was no difference between 'Farz-e-Kifaya' and 'Farz-e-Ain' in terms of its "Wujub", for both of them fall under the head of "Wajib". Some scholars interpret it otherwise on the ground that the performance of "Wajib-e-Ain" by a few do not exonerate all others whereas it does so in respect of Farz-e-Kifaya'. This, however, only indicates the difference in principles valid for the two duties and does not at all question the "Wujub" of the two duties.

(al-Ihkam fi usul al-Ahkam. Vol. I. pp. 141-142)

2. 'Farz-e-Ain' is incumbent on each and every Muslim but the incumbency of 'Faz-e-Kifaya' is collective. In other words, to perform the former each individual has to worry: for the latter there should be a collective worry. Those who fail to perform 'Farz-e-Kifaya', either intentionally or unintentionally, shall be answerable. Its performance by a few, however, exonerates all others. Discussing the point of "Wajib Ala al-Kifaya" Maulana Abdul Ali

Ansari remarks:

الواجب الذي من شأنه أن يثاب الآتون ولا يعاقب التاركون،
إذا أتى به البعض. وإن لم يأت أحد يعاقب الكل

Those who perform such a duty ('Farz-e-Kifaya') shall be rewarded. If it is performed by a few, others are exonerated. However, if it is not at all performed, all shall suffer on this account.

(Sharh Muslallam al-Suboot Vol.I, p.62-63)

Arrangements must therefore be made by the Ummah for its performance by, at least, a few persons.

3. The point which duty ('Farz-e-Kifaya' or 'Farz-e-Ain') is more desirable has not been discussed at length, as informed by Jalal al-Mahli. One may, however, infer that 'Farz-e-Ain' is superior to 'Farz-e-Kifaya' for the former duty is incumbent on each and every Muslim. However, a number of scholars such as Allama Abu Ishaq Asfaraini, Imam al-Harmain and Allama Abu Mohammad Juwaini think otherwise. For them, those who perform 'Farz-e-Kifaya' exonerate others from this duty. But one performs 'Farz-e-Ain' only for himself. Looked at from this angle, one can hardly belittle the significance of 'Farz-e-Kifaya'.
4. What constitutes the performance of 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi An al Munkar' is to persuade someone to offer prayers or to dissuade a drunkard from drinking wine. Such a duty is to be performed constantly as, for example, to persuade someone to offer prayers. It will not be, therefore, altogether wrong to refer to 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi an al-Munkar' as 'Farz-e-Ain'. For forbidding certain acts the duty is not to be performed constantly. An

instance in point is to protest against the un-Islamic tenor of the discussion in a given meeting. Such a duty can be performed by anyone of the audience. However if no one objects to it, all those present there shall be liable to punishment in the Hereafter. Thus, in certain respects the duty is no more than 'Farz-e-Kifaya'.

5. The performance of 'Amr bi al-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' by only an individual or a few does not exonerate all others. Those ignorant of the tenets of Islam are to be guided. As it is, it is not an easy task. Scattered all over the world, millions of Muslims belong to various linguistic and cultural groups. So are the problems of these millions of persons numerous. It is thus impossible for only a particular band of persons to do justice to the performance of the duty of 'Amr bi al-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. People familiar with the local problems of Muslims belonging to different places are required to perform the duty properly. The Qur'anic advice on the strategy for its performance is as follows:

فَلَوْلَا نَفَرَ مِنْ كُلِّ فِرْقَةٍ مِنْهُمْ طَائِفَةٌ لِيَتَفَقَّهُوا فِي الدِّينِ وَلِيُنذِرُوا قَوْمَهُمْ إِذَا رَجَعُوا إِلَيْهِمْ لَعَلَّهُمْ يَحْذَرُونَ (التوبة: ١٢٢)

If a contingent from every expedition remained behind, they could devote themselves to studies in religion. And admonish the people when they return to them, - That thus they (may learn) to guard themselves (against evil). (9:122)

Relevant portions of Qazi Baizawi's comment on the above-quoted verse are reproduced below:

فهلّا نفر من كل جماعة كثيرة كقبيلة وأهل بلدة جماعة قليلة... ليجعلوا غاية سعيهم ومعظم غرضهم من الفقهاء، إرشاد القوم وإنذارهم

There should arise a band of people out of Muslims in all sections and towns to guide and admonish others. (Anwar al-Tanzeel Vol. I, p.352)

This duty, it is obvious, is to be performed everywhere, as pointed out by Allama Baghwi:

Jurisprudence stands for the knowledge of the duties of Islam which are of two types. 'Farz-e-Ain' and 'Farz-e-Kifaya'. Prayers, fasting and other duties are of the former type. Not only should one perform these duties but acquire also the knowledge of their incumbency such as that of Haj and Zakat. Such a knowledge which may help one form his own judgment in matters relating to the religion constitutes 'Farz-e-Kifaya'. If the people in a town lack this knowledge, all of them shall be answerable. On the contrary, if they possess it, everyone is exonerated. In future they are to be guided in the light of this knowledge thus gained. (Maalim al-Tanzeel. vol. III. p.138)

For guiding the laymen it is imperative that there should be scholars in each and every town. If there is no such person in a town, all the inhabitants of the town shall be answerable to Allah.

6. In Imam Ibn Tayimiya's view:

الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر لا يجب على كل أحد بعينه، بل هو على الكفاية، كما دل عليه القرآن. ولما كان الجهاد من تمام ذلك كان الجهاد أيضاً من فروض الكفاية

'Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is, as the Qur'an indicates, 'Farz-e-Kifaya', not 'Farz-e-Ain'. As Jihad is a part and complement of this task, it (Jihad) is a duty incumbent on a few (Farz-e-Kifaya). (al-Hisba fi al-Islam, p. 66)

In the event of 'Jihad' all those who are able to fight, according to the scholars, are to take part in it as an obligatory duty. If they are too weak or negligent it is the duty of their neighbours to come to their rescue. Should they also be unable to resist the enemy, it is incumbent in turn on their neighbour and it is thus possible that at a given stage it may be even incumbent on all Muslims.

(Fath al-Qadeer, Vol. IV, pp. 280-281)

The same analogy holds good for 'Amr bi al Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar'. If the Muslims at a given place fail to perform this duty, it is the duty of their neighbours to perform it. This incumbency is in accord with 'Shariah'. Like 'Jihad' the performance of 'Amr bi al-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar' may also be incumbent on all Muslims at a given stage.

7. Though enjoining good and forbidding evil is a duty incumbent on a few, there are occasions when this duty gets elevated to a duty incumbent on all. Those occasions are as follows:
- (a) Those directed by the Islamic state should perform it as 'Farz-e-Ain', as described by Nizamuddin Nishapuri

إن نصب لذلك رجل تعين عليه بحكم الولاية، وهو
المُخْتَسِبُ

Those appointed by the government for performing 'Amr bil-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar' are known as 'Muhtasib' and they ought to do it

as an obligatory duty. (Gharaib al-Qur'an, Vol. IV, p. 30)

- (b) Should one come to know of the defiance of 'Amr bil-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar' at a given place, he is to perform the duty as Farz-e-Ain', as pointed out by Mulla Ali Qari thus:

إن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر فرض كفاية إن علم به
أكثر من واحد والا فهو فرض عين على من رآه

'Amr bi al-Marooif wa Nahi An al-Munkar' is doubtless 'Farz-e-Kifaya'. However, if everyone is ignorant of it, one who possesses the knowledge has to perform the duty as 'Farz-e-Ain'.

(al-Mubeen al-Moin, p.89)

- (c) According to Ibn al-Arabi Maliki, it is 'Farz-e-Ain' for those who possess requisite knowledge:

الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر فرض كفاية .. وقد
يكون فرض عين إذا عرف المرء من نفسه صلاحية النظر
والاستقلال بالجدال أو عرف ذلك منه

Though 'Amr bil-Marooif wa Nahi Anil Munkar' is 'Farz-e-Kifaya', it is compulsory for him who is capable of advancing convincing arguments in defence of this duty. (Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol.I, p.122)

- (d) If no one is performing this duty, those who are capable should do it as 'Farz-e-Ain. In the opinion of Imam Ibn Taymiya.

وهو فرض على الكفاية، ويصير فرض عين على القادر الذي
لم يقم به غيره

The duty is incumbent on a few but it is incumbent on an eligible person when no one

else is performing the duty.

(Al-Hisbah fi al-Islam, p.37)

The same view is shared by Imam Ghazali thus:

إن الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر واجب وإن
فرضه لا يسقط مع القدرة الا بقيام قائم به

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is a compulsory duty. It does not cease to be compulsory for a person qualified to perform it until and unless somebody else has performed it. (Ihya-e-Uloom al-Din, Vol. II. p. 274)

CHAPTER-IV

MEANING AND SCOPE

'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi an al-Munkar' bears the connotations of a revolutionary task entrusted to Muslims. For its performance, it is necessary to know what it stands for. Without gaining such a knowledge it might be impossible to do justice to this duty. Generally speaking, MarooF connotes universal virtues. So is the term 'Munkar' that embraces all such acts considered universally as wrong and evil. It is not, therefore, surprising to note that the meaning and scope of 'Amr bil-MarooF wa Nahi An al-Munkar' has popularly been confined to preaching morals. However, the Qur'anic connotations of this term are all-embracing. Over the centuries the Ummah has narrowed down its meaning and scope. The duty, according to the Qur'an, is not synonymous with the mere preaching of ethical principles. Included in its scope, is the effort for preserving and establishing the Islamic way of life. Only those ignorant of its real meaning seem to be content with interpreting it in terms of 'moral preaching' which, they believe, serves the purpose. They hardly feel concerned for upholding the Islamic principles. On the contrary, they regard such an effort to be beyond the scope. On being told to do this duty - Muslims, generally speaking, retort that in preaching morals they have performed the duty of 'Amr bil MarooF wa Nahi Anal Munkar. This view stems not only from a misinterpretation of this term but also from the ignorance, in general, of the real meaning of this Qur'anic term. As a result, they are in the dark about the duty which

is to be performed by them. It is perhaps needless to mention that Allah demands this duty of the whole of Ummah.

Real Meaning of the Term

The Qur'anic term, 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anal Munkar', in fact, stands for the following points.

First, the Qur'an has used this term with reference to the mission of the prophets. The prophets, it is common knowledge, were not mere preachers of morals. The moral preaching, no doubt, constitutes partially their mission. But the real aim of the prophets was to make people subservient to Allah. Moreover, they saw to it that it was a total obedience in all spheres of life such as beliefs, morals, culture, trade, politics and social laws. In sum, to make people accept the Will of Allah in each and every respect is one of the constituents of the duty 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anal Munkar'.

Second, Prophets performed the same duty. Thus the duty is not related to a particular sphere of life but to all departments of life. Like the prophets, the Ummah has also been assigned the duty of performing "Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi An al-Munkar". And for performing this duty the honorific appellation of "the best community" has been bestowed on Muslims. If the duty is interpreted in terms of moral preaching, such a duty has been performed by different groups down the ages. For example in our own times the moral preaching is a truism of the day, though the signs of moral degeneration are obvious everywhere. A spate of volumes on morals do appear every year. Similarly, a number of organisations, most of which are headed by non-Muslims, are engaged in

preaching morals. Should Muslims also interpret the duty in terms of preaching morals, they cannot lay the claim for their superiority over others. Muslims have thus not merely to act as moral preachers. They have to launch radical reforms in all spheres of life which alone can lend the colour of the prophetic mission to their efforts and distinguish them as "the best community". Allah has not bestowed the title of "the best community" on Muslims for merely preaching morals in a given part of the world. In recognition of their efforts for upholding and enforcing the Will of Allah in all matters of life Muslims have been referred to as "the best community". According to Allama Abu Hayyan Andalusi, Muslims have been described as "the best community", for

وهي سبقهم إلى الإيمان برسول الله وبادارهم إلى نصرته،
ونقلهم عنه علم الشريعة، وافتاحهم البلاد

They were the first to believe in the Prophet and help him in his mission. Moreover, they transmitted 'Shariah' to others and conquered many lands in Allah's cause.

(Al-Bahr Al-Muheet Vol. III p.29)

Muslims have been directed in the Surah, "House of Imran" to make the call for inviting others to good and perform the duty of 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi anal-Munkar. The two duties are not different from each other. The latter duty is, in a certain sense, the elaboration of the former one. 'Dawat ila al-Khair' stands for inviting others to Islam and 'Shariah'. The different aspects of this duty, discussed at length by the classical writers, are as follows: Imam Razi:

الدعوة إلى الخير جنس تحته نوعان: أحدهما الترغيب في
فعل ما ينبغي وهو الأمر بالمعروف، والثاني الترغيب في
ترك ما لا ينبغي وهو النهي عن المنكر

The call to khair involves both enjoining the desirable and that is 'Amr bil Maroof and the forbidding of certain undesirable acts and that is "Nahi Anal-Munkar. (Al-Tafseer Al-Kabeer Vol. III p.20)

Nizamuddin Qummi Nishapuri:

ولأجرم اتبعه النوعين زيادة في البيان

It is definite that after Dawat ilal Khair, Allah mentions the two points 'Amr bil Maroof' and Nahi Anil Munkar' for further elaboration. (Gharaib Al-Qur'an Vol. IV p 30)

The two duties - 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar' and 'Dawat ilal Khair'-aim at making people believe in and uphold the Will of Allah in all matters of consequence.

Comments of the Classical Writers:

To hold 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar' synonymous with the preaching of morals is an innovation, for in the course of thirteen centuries not a single writer has interpreted the Qur'anic concept in such terms. 'Scholars and writers of all shades of opinion do agree that the scope of the Qur'anic concept of 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar' is quite comprehensive, encompassing beliefs, prayer, morals, trade and all other spheres of life. Any attempt to narrow its scope impairs the very purpose of this duty. Below are reproduced the comments of classical writers which leave no room whatsoever for interpreting this Qur'anic concept in terms

of the moral preaching:

Qazi Shaukani:

أخرج ابن أبي حاتم عن أبي العالية قال : كل آية ذكرها الله في القرآن في الأمر بالمعروف فهو الاسلام والنهي عن المنكر فهو عبادة الاوثان انتهى، وهو تخصيص بغير مخصص فليس في لغة العرب ولا في عرف الشرع ما يدل على ذلك

On the authority of Ibn Abi Hatim it is reported that Abul Aliya made the following remark: 'All the verses referring to this concept, in fact, mean preaching Islam. 'Amr bil Maroof' stands for Islam whereas 'Nahi Anil Munkar implies forbidding idolatry. This interpretation cannot be, however, substantiated by the 'Shariah' or the Arabic language. It has a general purport.

(Fath al-Qadeer, Vol. I, p.338)

Abu Hayyan Andalusi:

فسر بعضهم المعروف بالتوحيد والمنكر بالكفر ولاشك أن التوحيد رأس المعروف والكفر رأس المنكر ولكن الظاهر العموم في كل معروف مأمور به في الشرع. وفي كل منهي نهى عنه في الشرع

Some scholars have interpreted the concept of 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar' with reference to monotheism and polytheism. Monotheism is doubtless the first and foremost "Khair" that is to be enjoined. So is polytheism the worst wrong to be forbidden. Nonetheless, the interpretation should be in general terms. All that is in accord with "Shariah" is "al-Maroofof" and

all that is forbidden by "Shariah" is 'al-Munkar'.

(al-Bahr al-Muheet, Vol. III, pp. 20-21)

Imam Razi:

رأس المعروف الإيمان بالله ، ورأس المنكر الكفر بالله

The essence of Maroof is belief in Allah and of Munkar is denying (the existence of) Allah.

(31-Tafseer al-Kabeer, Vol. IV, p. 523)

Abu Bakr Jassas:

المعروف هو أمر الله، والمنكر هو ما نهى الله عنه

'Maroof stands for what Allah has prescribed and Munkar stands for what He has proscribed.

(Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. II, p.41)

Haddadi:

المعروف هو السنة، والمنكر هو البدعة

Maroof is 'Sunnah' whereas 'Munkar' is the innovation. (Ruh al-Bayan, Vo. I, p. 959)

Allama Sayed Mahmood Alusi:

و المتبادر من المعروف الطاعات ومن المنكر المعاصي التي
أنكرها الشرع

"Maroof" includes all that is to be followed while all that is forbidden in "Shariah constitutes 'Munkar'. (Ruh al-Maani, Vol.I, p. 28)

Allama Ibn Hajar Haitami:

المراد بالأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر الأمر بواجبات
الشرع، والنهي عن محرماته

Included in 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi Anil Munkar' are the acts both prescribed and forbidden by Shariah. (al-Zawajr, Vol. II, p. 146)

Ibn Malik:

(المنكر) هو ما ليس فيه رضا الله من قول أو فعل والمعروف
ضده

What is contrary to the Will of Allah in word or deed is 'Munkar' and what is not, happens to be 'Maroof'. (Mabariq al-Azhar, Vol. I, p.48)

Mulla Ali Qari:

المنكر ما أنكره الشرع، وكرهه، ولم يرض به

'Munkar' stands for all that is forbidden or undesirable according to "Shariah".

(al-Mubeen al-Moin, p. 188)

Allama Munawi:

(من رأى منكم منكراً) شيئاً قبحه الشرع فعلاً أو قولاً
(فليغيره)

Anyone who sees Munkar, that is, what Shariah has forbidden in speech and action, must change it. (al-Tayseer, Vol. I, p. 418)

Imam Ibn Taymiya:

يدخل في المعروف كل واجب وفي المنكر كل قبيح. و
القبائح هي السيئات وهي المحظورات كالشرك والكذب
والظلم والفواحش.

Included in "Maroof" is all that is "Wajib" and in 'Munkar' all that is forbidden. Acts of polytheism, falsehood, oppression and obscenity are forbidden by "Shariah". (al-Aqeeda al-Isfahaniya, p.121)

The preaching of morals is, in fact, one of the

constituents of the duty of *Amr bil-Maroofoo wa Nahi An al-Munkar*. The scope of the term 'Maroofoo' is vast enough as it includes the whole 'Shariah', the law, 'Sunnah' and the teachings of the Prophet. All that is opposed to 'Maroofoo' might be referred to as 'Munkar'. The point, being a very important one, deserves a fuller discussion from another angle.

'Shariah' is Maroofoo and all that is Contrary to It is 'Munkar'

Human law is flawed in principle. God alone has the right to legislate for mankind. Man can ill-afford to be above law in personal or in social spheres of life. It is not permissible for him to make a law by himself and abide by it. Divine law can be defined as 'Maroofoo' and what clashes with it can be defined as 'Munkar'. If man acknowledges God as the Legislator, then his life becomes subservient to Maroofoo and proceeds along the right lines. However, if he refuses to concede that position to Him, then he has to choose one of the two alternatives. One alternative is to leave the right to legislate and to make decisions to his whim and wit and to abide by their decision. The second alternative is to abide by the decision of another individual like him or of a group. Both alternatives can be ruinous for him. The main thrust of *Amr bil Maroofoo and Nahi Anil Munkar* is to enslave man to one and only God and to emancipate him from every other form of slavery. Divine legislation is promulgated to triumph and dominate; it is the duty of the believers in God to facilitate its domination and eliminate all laws opposed to it.

Allah desires that His religion should be accepted as it is and without the admixture of any other schemata of

thought and action, and that His writ should run in every sphere of existence and His commandments should be obeyed. God alone has the right to legislate and we do not have that right nor can we make amendments in His Law. Deviation from and defiance of His religion is not the only act of Munkar; it is also Munkar to alter His religion and to follow the man-made distortions of His religion. God does not like implementation of Munkar but demands the implementation of Maroof which in essence is the total acceptance of God's religion as it is. It is an earnest endeavour to make it prevail internally and externally.

Imam Ibn Taymiyah notes:

الأمر والنهي من لوازم وجود بني آدم. فمن لم يأمر بالمعروف الذي أمر الله به ورسوله، وينه عن المنكر الذي نهى الله عنه ورسوله، ويؤمر بالمعروف الذي أمر الله به ورسوله ومنه عن المنكر الذي نهى الله عنه ورسوله، وإلا فلا بد أن يؤمر وينهى، يأمر وينهى إما بما يضاد ذلك وإما بما يشترك فيه الحق الذي أنزله الله بالباطل الذي لم ينزله الله، وإذا اتخذ ذلك ديناً كان ديناً مبتدعاً.

Enjoining and prohibiting are integral to human existence. When a man does not enjoin Maroof which Allah and His Messenger have enjoined on him, when a man does not prohibit a Munkar which Allah and His Messenger have prohibited, when a Maroof which Allah and His Messenger have enjoined is not enjoined upon himself and when a Munkar which Allah and His Messenger have prohibited is not made forbidden to himself,

then it naturally follows that whatever he will enjoin and whatever he will prohibit, and whatever he is ordered to do and whatever is forbidden to him, will be either the opposite of the precepts of Allah and His Messenger or a mixture of God-ordained truth and falsehood not ordained by God. When man adopts either alternative as a way of his life, it will be a self-manipulated way of life; (and not a deen ordained by God). (al-Hisbaha fi al-Islam, p.87)

The two terms-'Munkar' and 'Maroof' are, as may be observed in the light of the above discussion, rooted in 'shariah'. The beliefs and acts relating to prayers, conduct, dealings, trade, Politics and culture as ordained by 'Shariah' are 'Maroof'. And the forbidden acts are 'Munkar'. 'Amr bil Maroof wa Nahi An al-Munkar' should therefore be done according to these terms of reference.

Shariah arbitrates on the issue of Maroof and Munkar

It is now necessary to remove a misunderstanding. As long as this misunderstanding persists, the concept of Maroof and Munkar will not be crystal clear. It is generally assumed that Maroof stands for what is well-known and approved and Munkar for what is not so well-known and approved. However, what is familiar to man or which activity is familiar and desirable to a group need not be deemed to be Maroof automatically. Similarly, what is unknown or disliked by an individual or a group need not be taken as Munkar. The Qur'an and the Hadith have given a specific connotation to these two terms. If you analyse the connotation, you will realize that Maroof refers to that belief and action which God's Shariah recognises and appreciates as good and Munkar

refers to that belief and action which is alien to and disapproved by God's Shariah. If a new idea is discovered by means of ratiocination or a new method gains wide popularity and appreciation, that idea or method will come under the category of Maroof, only when the Qur'an and the Hadith will recognize it as Maroof too. Likewise, if a thing is unknown to and disliked by the human mind and not widely known to and appreciated by the social convention, that thing need not be kept in the category of Munkar until and unless the Shariah declares it to be Munkar. Shariah has the criterion by which it decides what constitutes Maroof and what should go by the name of Munkar. There is a possibility that some intellectuals at a given time may declare a certain action to be 'Maroof' when Shariah holds it to be Munkar or they may declare a certain belief or action to be Munkar when Shariah deems it to be a part of Maroof. Imam Raghīb says:

المعروف اسم لكل فعل يعرف بالعقل او الشرع حسنه و
المنكر ما ينكر بهما

Any action whose goodness is recognised by common sense and Shariah is Maroof; Munkar is that which common sense and Shariah disapprove.

(Al-Mufradat fi Gharib al-Qur'an; Root word, عرف)

From this excerpt, one should not conclude that the mind and Shariah are equally valid as the source of determining what Maroof and Munkar are, because as far as this issue goes, the mind is subservient to the Shariah. However, it goes without saying, that if the mind is sound and has no perversity in it, it will be in total harmony with

the divine Law, because no diktat or decree of Shariah can ever be in conflict with the mind. That is the reason for Imam Raghīb's bracketing of the mind with the Shariah. Otherwise, where it is not possible for the mind to decide whether a thing is Maroof or Munkar the decision of the Shariah will be final. He has made this point clear while explaining what Munkar is. He says,

المنكر كل فعل تحكم العقول الصحيحة بقبحه او توقف
في استقباحه واستحسانه العقول فتحكم بقبحه الشريعة.

Munkar is what the sound mind defines as evil;
or, while the mind hesitates in the act of
determining whether a certain thing is good or
evil, Munkar is what Shariah decides to be evil.

(ibid; see the root word - نكر)

Ibn Abi Jamrah says that when the Shariah describes a certain act as virtuous, then it is Maroof irrespective of the verdict of the society's conventions or customs because the right to legislate rests with the Shariah and not with the customs.

يطلق اسم المعروف على ما عرف بادلة الشرع من اعمال
البر سواء جرت به العادة ام لا

"The term 'Maroof' is applicable to every virtuous deed whose virtue is established through a proof of Shariah, irrespective of the social norm being in consonance or conflict with it."

(Fath al-Bari, Vol. X, P.342)

On certain occasions scholars discuss the reputation or otherwise and the popularity or otherwise of a certain thing in such a way as to create an ostensible impression that, in determining the scope and meaning of Maroof and

Munkar, the Muslim society has as much a say as the Shariah. Nothing can be farther from the truth. There is no doubt whatsoever that the belief and the activity known to and appreciated by the people of the faith will be recognized as 'Maroof'. Similarly, the belief and the activity alien to and undesirable for them will come under the category of 'Munkar'. This is not due to their application of the mind or their approval in the light of their experience, racial and national traditions. Instead, it is due to their loyalty and allegiance to Shariah and in the light of God's religion that the believers in God and the Prophet accept a thing as Maroof and reject another as Munkar. They accept any thought or action as Maroof only when the divine law defines it as Maroof. If the divine law defines a certain belief or action as Munkar, they accept it as Munkar unquestioningly. They do not have the audacity to renounce a thing as Munkar when the Shariah declares it to be Maroof and to adopt a thing as Maroof when the Shariah puts it under the category of Munkar.

Allama Ibn Jareer Tabari says:

اصل المعروف كل ما كان معروفاً ففعله جميل مستحسن
غير مستقبح في اهل الايمان بالله واما سميت طاعة الله
معروفاً لانه مما يعرفه اهل الايمان ولا يستكفون فعله واصل
المنكر ما نكره الله ورأوه قبيحاً ففعله ولذلك سميت
معصية الله منكراً لان اهل الايمان يستكفون فعلها
ويستعظمون ركوبها (جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن جلد ٢ ص: ٢٨)

The truth about Maroof is this: every thing (according to Shariah) is too well-known and

well-reputed. Believers in God commonly share an appreciation of its performance and do not dislike doing it. It is because of this attitude that obedience to Allah is looked upon as Maroof. The faithful recognize it clearly and do not dislike it. The truth about Munkar is this: every thing that Allah disapproves of and the people of faith find it abhorrent to do (is Munkar). It is because of this attitude that disobedience to Allah is considered Munkar, and the people of faith dislike it and consider disobedience to Allah to be a very serious crime. (Jamey al-Bayan, vol. 4, p.28)

Imam Shawkani writes about the members of the Muslim Ummah:

انهم يأمرون بما هو معروف في هذه الشريعة وينهون عما هو منكراً فالدليل على كون ذلك الشيء معروفاً او منكراً هو الكتاب او السنة. (ارشاد الفحول الى تحقيق الحق من علم الاصول، ص: ٤٢)

They decree that what Shariah defines as Maroof should be performed and they prohibit the observance of Munkar. It naturally follows that the Qur'an and the Sunnah are the ultimate authority in determining what Maroof and Munkar are.

(Irshad al-Fuhool, p.74)

This is why our scholars defined Maroof and Munkar not by resorting to the terminology of either rationality and wisdom and logic and philosophy or socio-anthropology but by resorting to purely authentic terms of Shariah. These scholars define Maroof and Munkar by using terms like obedience to God or disobedience, permissible, forbidden (halal/haram), compulsory and additional (fard/Nafil), commendable and repugnant etc.

This is just to drive home that the divine law will distinguish between Maroof and Munkar, and by no other means will they be distinguished. God's law alone indicates to us what activities please Him and what activities displease Him, what is allowed and what is disallowed, what is urgent and desirable, what is wrong and undesirable.

Allama Ibn Atheer defines Maroof in the following words:

(المعروف) اسم جامع لكل ما عرف من طاعة الله والتقرب اليه والأحسان الى الناس وكل ما ندب اليه الشرع ونهى عنه من المَحَسِّنَات والمَقْبَحَات وهو من الصفات الغالبة اى امر معروف بين الناس اذارأوه لَا يَنْكُرُونَهُ.

Maroof is a comprehensive term, it includes obedience to God, proximity to Him, pleasant social behaviour and all other virtues that Shariah extols for assimilation. Maroof includes the avoidance of all Shariah-prohibited evil things. Maroof is one of the dominant attributes. Maroof refers to that duty which people know well to be good and do not react to it in a hostile manner on seeing it. (Al-Nihaya fi gharib al-Hadith, root word 'عرف', vol. 3, p. 85)

While defining 'Munkar', the same scholar says:

المنكر... ضد المعروف، و كل ما قبحه الشرع و حرمه و كرهه فهو منكّر

Munkar is the antonym of Maroof. Everything that Shariah describes as evil, unlawful and repulsive is Munkar". (ibid., see 'نكر' Vol. 4, p.175)

Allama Saawi says:

المعروف المراد به ماطلبه الشارع اماعلى سبيل الوجوب كالصلوات الخمس وبروالدين وصلة الرحم والندب كالنوافل وصدقات التطوع ... المنكر المراد به ما نهى عنه الشارع اما على سبيل الحرمة كالزنا والسرقة او على سبيل الكراهة .

By 'Maroof' are meant either matters made compulsory by Allah, the Law-giver, such as five obligatory Prayers or excellent behaviour towards parents and kith and kin or matters made desirable by Him such as additional and voluntary Prayers or voluntary donations... by 'Munkar' is meant that thing which the Divine Law-giver has forbidden by declaring it unlawful such as adultery and stealing or has kept people away from it by declaring it undesirable

(His comment in Tafseer Jalalayn, vol. I, p. 152)

Allama Abdul Qadir Audah Shaheed says:

الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر يدخل فيه الامر بكل ما اوجبت الشريعة عمله اوجبت للناس فعله من صلاة وصيام وحج وتوحيد غير ذلك والنهي عن المنكر يدخل فيه النهي عن كل ما خالف الشريعة من افعال وعقائد فيدخل فيه النهي عن التثليث وعن القول بصلب المسيح وقتله ويدخل فيه النهي عن الترهيب وعن شرب الخمر وعن اكل لحم الخنزير وغير ذلك مما تخالف فيه الشريعة الاسلامية الاذيان الاخرى.

Amr bil Maroof includes every activity which

Shariah has made compulsory or desirable such as Prayer, fasting, hajj, monotheism, etc. Nahi Anil Munkar covers all beliefs and actions which are anti-Shariah. Belief in Trinity and belief in the crucifixion or slaying of Jesus are thus forbidden likewise, monasticism, alcoholism, pork are included among the things forbidden in Islamic Shariah which distinguishes it from other religions. (At-tashree Al-Jinai, part I, p. 497)

These excerpts make it clear that Maroof and Munkar are not terms which man can use indiscriminately. Instead these terms reflect God's will in favour of or against a given thing. It is the prerogative of God to describe a thing as Maroof or Munkar; man cannot claim that right. God's law determines what Maroof is or what Munkar is. If a man claims that right and denies that right to Shariah- the right to define Maroof and Munkar, he claims that, instead of God, he himself is the maker of Shariah and law-giver. This is not merely a denial of God; it is tantamount to open rebellion. The very thought of it is unnerving.

CHAPTER-V**RANGE AND
COMPREHENSIVENESS****Enjoin the Good and forbid the Evil : A Campaign of
Persuasion and Training**

To enjoin the good and to forbid the evil combine two distinct errands — persuasion and preaching on the one hand, organization and training on the other. These two errands follow a natural sequence for their compilation. To begin with, people are invited to learn about the religion propounded by God. Later, those who volunteer to uphold the religion are organized and trained. The success or failure of the first step depends on the quality of this organization and training. The organization must be strong and the training should be on the right lines to ensure the success of the preaching. Otherwise the failure of the preaching is unavoidable. To be sure, there is a very strong and close link between preaching and persuasion on the one hand and organization and training on the other. Without the former, the latter cannot come into being; without the latter, the former cannot reach its ultimate destination.

There is no gainsaying the fact that the target audience of the one is different from that of the other. The message of Islam is conveyed to those people who have not yet entered its fold and the neophytes from among them are those people who are organized and trained. Notwithstanding this difference, both errands are executed with one common aim. A worshipper of God will invite the world to worship God and organize his

party on the basis of his core teaching. In sharp contrast, an atheist will proclaim that God is a delusion and organize his followers on the basis of atheism. These examples drive home the fact that preaching and organizing are two ostensibly different errands but in reality they are the two sides of the same coin.

The Muslim community has to undertake both errands. In other words the duty of Amr bil Maroof (enjoining the good) and Nahi anil Munkar (forbidding the evil) has to be discharged within its circle and without too. When the community discharges this duty outside its circle, that work is known as preaching and persuasion. When the community discharges this duty within its circle, it will be known as organizing and training. Our exegetes are of opinion that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar are so comprehensive as to include in them the following: Dissemination of knowledge about faith and Islam, opposition to the worship of non-God, refutation of atheism and polytheism, and taking up of the gauntlet for the sake of the Allah; promulgation of the penal and Shariah laws, spending in Allah's way, conformity to the Prophet's way of life, exhortation to avoid new ways (alien to the ethos of Islam). It is obvious that this list comprises two different types of work. The first four of these relate to dawah; the next four deal with organization and training. The exegetes not only hold the opinion that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar include the two different types of work but also mention these two types of work simultaneously while explaining each verse pertaining to this theme, whether the verse obviously deals with preaching or with organization and training. It is as though wherever there is the order of enjoining the

good and forbidding the evil in the Qur'an, it carries with it the instruction that the Muslim community should pay attention to self-reform and at the same time should establish God's religion among others. A little more elaborate discussion will be in order here.

The Muslim Community should campaign for the promotion of the good and the prohibition of evil among others.

God explains what agenda He has prescribed for the Muslim community in the following words:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ
الْمُنْكَرِ وَتُؤْمِنُونَ بِاللَّهِ (آل عمران: ١١٠)

Ye are the best of people, evolved for mankind,
enjoining what is right, forbidding what is wrong,
and believing in Allah. (3:110)

The tenor of this verse clearly indicates that the duty allotted to this community has to be performed outside its circle. This community has been brought forth as a community for the rest of mankind and it can justify its existence by enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong. It has not come into existence on its own. Instead, it has been deliberately evolved with a set purpose of reforming and guiding men. It has a sacred mission of calling people towards the religion of truth and escorting the world on the way of the Lord. Every group is free to determine the purpose of its life; every party is free to choose its course. But 'the best nation' has abdicated this freedom and accepted unquestioningly the ideal prescribed for it by God. Therefore it has no right to choose a new course for itself and race along that course.

The day the Muslim community is guilty of asserting this right, it will not retain the status of 'the best nation.' The community has been ordered to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong and the purpose of its existence now is the execution of this order. God has given this community a post and the success or failure of the community will be determined on the Day of Judgement on the basis of its commitment or lack of it at the post.

Shaikh Abu al-Saud explains the meaning of "ukhrijat linnas" (evolved for mankind) thus:

أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ صِفَةٌ لِأُمَّةٍ وَاللَّامُ مُتَعَلِّقَةٌ بِأَخْرَجَتْ أَيْ
أُظْهِرَتْ لَهُمْ فَقِيلَ بِخَيْرِ أُمَّةٍ أَيْ كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ النَّاسِ لِلنَّاسِ فَهُوَ
صَرِيحٌ فِي أَنَّ الْخَيْرِيَّةَ بِمَعْنَى النِّفْعِ لِلنَّاسِ وَأَنَّ فَهْمَ ذَلِكَ مِنْ
الْإِخْرَاجِ لَهُمْ أَيْ أُخْرِجَتْ لِأَجْلِهِمْ وَمَصْلَحَتِهِمْ

The phrase 'ukhrijat linnas' is a characteristic of the 'Ummah'. In the expression 'linnas', the use of 'li' signifies the relationship. 'ukhrijat' is used to denote a fact that it has been brought into existence for the benefit of the people. It has been said that 'li' is related to the phrase khair-e-ummat (the best nation). If it is so, then it will mean that the Muslim community occupies that position by virtue of its service to mankind. "Khair", then, clearly refers to the benefit that accrues to mankind through the Muslim community. This interpretation is comprehensible even if the first opinion is accepted. When it is said that this community has been brought forth for the benefit and service of the rest of mankind, it means the same. (Irshad al-Aql al-Saleem, Vol. 2, p.496)

Imam Razi says:

قوله أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ فِيهِ قَوْلَانِ الْاَوَّلُ ان المعنى كنتم خير الأمم المخرجة للناس فى جميع الاعصار فقوله أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ اى اظهرت للناس حتى تميزت وعرفت وفصل بينها وبين غيرها والثانى ان قوله للناس من تمام قوله كنتم والتقدير كنتم للناس خیرامة.

There are two interpretations of "ukhrijat linnas." According to the first interpretation, the Muslim community is the best of all the communities of all times that preceded it for the guidance and reform of the peoples. Ukhrijat linnas therefore, will mean that the Muslim community was made manifest until it became distinguished, clearly recognized, and prominent after it has been set apart from other nations. The second interpretation is based upon the view that 'linnas' is an integral part of a sentence beginning with 'kuntum.' Viewed thus, it will mean that the Muslim community is second to none (in promoting the welfare) of mankind. (Mafatih al-Ghaib, Vol. 3, p:27)

Hazrat Abu Huraira (Allah be pleased with him) says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ قَالَ خَيْرُ النَّاسِ لِلنَّاسِ تَأْتُونَ بِهِمْ فِي السَّلَاسِلِ فِي أَعْنَاقِهِمْ حَتَّى يَدْخُلُوا فِي الْإِسْلَامِ

"You are the best nation brought forth for mankind". This means that you are the best individuals dedicated to the happiness of the people; you put fetters upon their necks and lead them until they enter the fold of Islam." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Tafseer, chapter III of the Qur'an.) Hazrat

Abu Huraira should not be misunderstood. He does not mean that Muslims should convert others by force and impose their religion on them. He means that Muslims should embody fully the ideal of 'Khair', (which motivates them to launch a struggle against the world) in their morals, in their character, in their conduct, in their treatment of their enemies; they should invite people to embrace the concept of "Khair" and at the same time they should become the living models of "Khair" for the world to see, so much so that people, imbued with anti-Muslim malice and hatred, should feel voluntarily drawn towards this "Khair". When the community attains this position, then hearts of the people who rebelled against khair and consequently got fettered by Muslims will voluntarily open to receive Islam and thereby become eligible to receive Allah's mercy.)

On the statement of Hazrat Abu Huraira that the Muslim community is the best of mankind for the sake of mankind, Hafiz Ibn Hajar comments in the following words:

ای خیر بعض الناس لبعضهم ای انفعهم لهم وانما کان
ذالک لكونهم کانوا سببا فی اسلامهم

"That is, some people surpass some others. In other words, they are most beneficial to others because they become instrumental in their conversion to Islam." (Fath al-Bari, vol.8, p.156)

In the excerpts quoted above, there have crept in discussions on the semantic range of certain words. Such discussions will certainly not be of common interest.

Still they have been included in this book in order that a statement of the Qur'an concerning the life-purpose of the Muslim community is elucidated in an academic and literary way. The Qur'an maintains that "the Muslim community has been brought forth for mankind." In the light of these discussions it becomes clear that this community is going to be more beneficial to humanity than any other community, group or nation because it shows the right way, invites others to the religion propounded by God and admits them to the fold of Islam. This point is further elaborated with the words, "You enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong." This elaboration establishes beyond a shadow of doubt the fact that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is a missionary work which the Muslim community has to undertake among all sections of humanity. The missionary quality of this project can be denied only by a man who has not reflected upon the words of the Qur'an or who is not qualified enough to make a deep study of the Qur'an.

Being Allah's witnesses to mankind is an inclusive Term

What is said in 3:110 is also said in another context in these words:

وَكَذَلِكَ جَعَلْنَاكُمْ أُمَّةً وَسَطًا لِتَكُونُوا شُهَدَاءَ عَلَى النَّاسِ
وَيَكُونَ الرَّسُولُ عَلَيْكُمْ شَهِيدًا
(البقرة: ١٤٣)

"Thus have we made of you an Ummah justly balanced that ye might be witnesses over the nations, and the Messenger a witness over yourselves." (2:143)

In 3:110, the Muslim community is described as "Khair-e-Ummat"; in 2:143, it is described as

"Ummat-e-Wasat", a justly balanced community or the community of the middle way. The two epithets do not have any radical semantic difference. The best community can be that which in thought and deed avoids extremism of any kind and is steadfast in upholding balance and equilibrium in all walks of life. What the Muslim community is expected to do is described as 'being witnesses to mankind' in one place and as "evolved for mankind to enjoin the right and forbid the wrong" in another place. Words are different but point to one reality. In the noble task of being witnesses to mankind; are compulsorily included the promotion of what is 'right' and the prohibition of what is 'wrong'.

The Reform and Upbringing of the Ummah are included in the task (Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar) too

The details furnished above give us to understand that the declaration of the Qur'an with regard to the Muslim community (that it is the best nation brought forth for mankind to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong) is in reality a declaration of its mission. However, let not the community jump to the conclusion that the task of internal reform and training and organization is excluded from the meaning and scope of this declaration. It is decidedly clear that just as the Muslim community cannot be indifferent to its mission, it cannot ignore for a moment the pressing need of its self-improvement, its reorientation and its emotional integration too. What it proposes to do externally it ought to do internally too. Before it launches its project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar for the benefit of others, the same project

has to be imposed voluntarily upon itself. If Maroof is not established upon the Muslim community and Munkar is not kept away from it, then the community has no justification to enjoin upon others what is right and forbid others what is wrong. So it goes without saying that both tasks are within the scope of the Quranic declaration.

Allama Sawi says:

قوله للناس انما عبر باللام دون من اشارة الى ان هذه الامة نفع
ورحمة لنفسها وللخلق عموماً في الدنيا بالدعاء لجميع الأمم
وفي الآخرة بالشهادة للأنبياء .

The Qur'an says, "evolved for mankind" and not "evolved within mankind". This highlights an eloquent suggestion that the Muslim community will be an embodiment of usefulness and mercy for itself and for the rest of mankind in the sense that in this world it will invite all nations of the world towards the religion of truth and in the next it will bear testimony in favour of the Prophets.

(Sawi's annotation on Jalalayn, vol. I, p. 153)

Mullah Jeevan says:

اخرجت للناس اى للانبياء للشهادة على دعوتهم اولللكفار
لقتالهم او للمومنين عامة

"Brought forth for mankind." That is, with regard to Prophets, it testifies to the truth of their mission; or with regard to those who do not believe, it wages a war against them; or for the sake of the common men of faith".

(Al-Tafseeraat-al-Ahmadiyya, p. 124)

Allama Sawi's words, "The Muslim community will be

an embodiment of usefulness and mercy for itself and for the rest of mankind", underpin the contention that the community has to address the task of mission and the task of internal cohesion. The upshot of being the best nation is to spread the message of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar both within and without. Mulla Jeevan prefers to put this idea in his own way. He says that this community has been brought forth to wage a war against those who do not believe or to work for the welfare of the common believers.

In their interpretations both Allama Sawi and Mullah Jeevan mention that the Muslim community will bear testimony in favour of the Prophets. What they mean is that on the Day of Judgement the community will bear testimony that just as Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) conveyed God's religion to the community, in the same way other Prophets of God had conveyed God's religion to their respective communities in every epoch. If any nation denies this fact, it is telling a lie and covering its crime.

The Qur'an's Commandment is a general one

To appreciate the wide range and scope of the commandment "Enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong", one has to ponder over another verse which contains an order for the Muslim community.

وَلْتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ يَدْعُونَ إِلَى الْخَيْرِ وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ
وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (آل عمران: ١٠٤)

"And from amongst you there must be a party who will call people to all that is good and will enjoin the doing of all that is right and forbid the

doing of all that is wrong. It is they who will attain true success." (3:104)

In the earlier excerpt, the words "brought forth for mankind" indicated that this community has to reach out to all people in order to enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong, whereas in the verse quoted above, there is a very general command about inviting people towards 'khair', promoting all that is right, and forbidding all that is wrong. This is a further evidence that the meaning of "evolved for mankind" is inherent in this verse too. No specific target group is mentioned for the project. There is an absolute generality in the way the order is spelt out. So, only when the community enjoins what is right upon every group and every party, that is upon the whole humanity and prevents it from doing what is wrong, can the community be free from its responsibility.

Allama Syed Mahmood Aalusi says:

حذف المفعول الصريح من الافعال الثلاثة اما للاعلام
بظهوره اى يدعون الناس ولو غير مكلفين ويامرؤهم وينهونهم
واما للقصد الى ايجاد نفس الفعل على حد فلان يعطى اى يفعلون
الدعاء والامر وانهى ويوقعونها (روح المعاني جزء ٣ ص ٢١٠)

The verbs denoting the three activities are used intransitively. This clear omission of the object is either to highlight the fact that the object is too obvious to be stated, that is, they invite people towards 'Khair' in spite of being under no obligation and enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong or to emphasize the fact the performance of the activities per se is more important. It is similar to our assertion like "Mr x is

ever in the habit of giving." (The aim of the assertion is not to focus on the beneficiaries). From this point of view, the meaning of the verse is that they resort to inviting, enjoining and forbidding and bringing these activities into being." (Ruh al-Ma'ani, part IV, p.21)

That is to say, in the eyes of this revered scholar, there are two reasons for the generality of this verse. One, the task of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong is applicable to all without any exception. Two, the aim is to make it clear that the Muslim community is in the habit of ever discharging the above-mentioned task. It has never been the aim from the very outset to determine the group or party in whose midst the task is being undertaken, even though it is obvious that in such a case the purpose of keeping the scope of the verse general is not made completely clear. What is plain and clear is that the Qur'an has issued a general order of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong and the Muslim community has to act in the spirit of this generality. On the one hand immunerable human beings are not conversant with and are indifferent to the religion of Islam propounded by God and on the other the mandatory duty of enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong has devolved upon the Muslim community. To discharge this duty fully, the Muslim community has perforce to strain every nerve to convey the message of Islam to all human beings who are either deprived of this religion or defiant of and deviant from Islam in spite of paying lip service to it. This comprehensive mission of the Muslim community cannot be limited to any special group. It will be a violation of

the ethos of the Qur'an if the Muslim community endeavours to save one section of humanity from perdition and allows another to suffer in perdition. This will also be a defective contribution to its divinely ordained mission. Allah ordains that Islam should reach every individual and every nation unfamiliar with it, that Maroof should be revived where it is in a state of decline, that Munkar should be eradicated where it is in a state of unhindered growth. Evil in an individual or a family or a tribe, prohibited activities in a locality or a city, moral depravity in a community or the country or nation should be compulsorily eliminated until subservience to Islam and its Shariah of every individual and every group is ensured and their conformity to its do's and don'ts is guaranteed.

The fact of the matter is that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar are comprehensive terms of the Qur'an as they encompass Islam in all its details and are inclusive of every service, big or small, that this religion is noted for. That is why, Ibn al-Arabi Maliki says:

الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر باب عظيم هو ابتداء الدين
والاسلام وهو ايضا انتهاؤه (احكام القرآن جلد ١ ص ٢٩٣)

" Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar constitute a great theme. They are the Alpha and the Omega of Deen and Islam." (Ahkamul Qur'an, vol. I, p.294)

It has been established in the foregoing pages that dawah and preaching, organization and training are included in Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. Consequently this duty has to be performed by the Muslim community in the Islamic as well as the

un-Islamic surroundings. In the un-Islamic surroundings, irrational postulates have to be criticised, Islam has to be effectively presented as an antidote to disbelief and polytheism, the success of truth and the defeat of falsehood should be striven for, in this process life and property could be put at stake-all these steps constitute Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. The requirements of this duty in the Islamic society are: the society should be strengthened, no rot should be allowed to set in, no effort should be spared to keep the society morally sound, the society should be rendered competent enough to ensure the supremacy of Islam in the world.

CHAPTER-VI**INVITING TOWARDS DEEN**

It is a well-known fact that God's religion was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) in a most hostile setting. The system and temperament of the religion were at odds with the prevailing system and temperament. The methodology of Islam was distinct from the practices in vogue in the world at that time. People were quite unfamiliar with the religion and at the utterance of its name they became ill-at-ease. The brave souls who dared to embrace it found themselves cut off from their circles and the very atmosphere did not tolerate their very presence. However, little by little the conditions changed, people's familiarity with God's religion grew, individuals broke away from various groups and made a beeline towards Islam, the roots of Islam grew stronger by the day. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and his companions (Allah be pleased with them all) made huge sacrifices to promote the cause of Islam. The sacrifices they made were unprecedented. They were ill-equipped, weak, and few in number. In contrast, their enemies were found everywhere and they were very strong in terms of equipment and numbers. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and his companions were not overawed by the strength of the enemies. Instead, they confronted the foes with steadfastness and patience until they prevailed and God's rule was established on God's earth. This achievement, registered fourteen hundred years ago, is

but a comprehensive, authentic and practical commentary of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. If this achievement is analysed, it becomes clear that it comprised three different tasks:

- 1) Dawah and preaching
- 2) Jihad in Allah's way
- 3) Establishment of an Islamic State

Every one of these tasks is Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar because all these tasks aim to establish Maroof and eliminate Munkar. If Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar are not the objectives of any dawah, or Jihad or state, then that dawah is not an invitation to God's religion, that Jihad is not a struggle in God's way and that state is not a government in which God's law is supreme.

Each one of these tasks requires an elaborate discussion, according to the sequence given above.

Propagation of Deen and Shariah

Words like 'enjoining' and 'prohibiting' in Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar give rise sometimes to a doubt that this task is in dire need of political power and government machinery and that it has nothing to do with preaching and persuasion. The discussion with regard to the meaning and scope and the range and comprehensiveness of the two phrases-Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar - in the preceding pages is in itself an automatic refutation of such an occasional doubt. The viewpoints of eminent scholars already presented make it abundantly clear that preaching and persuasion are a part and parcel of this sublime project. Two or three more excerpts are given below for further elucidation.

According to the Qur'an the distinguishing feature of

the best nation is that it enjoins what is right and prohibits what is wrong. Allama Ibn Jareer Tabari elucidates this feature thus:

قوله تامرون بالمعروف فانه يعنى تامرون بالايمن بالله
ورسوله والعمل بشرائعه وتنهون عن المنكر يعنى وتنهون عن
الشرك بالله وتكذيب رسوله وعن العمل بمانهى عنه.

(جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن جزء ٢٤ ص ٨٢)

By the statement, "You enjoin what is right", Allah implies that you enjoin belief in Allah and His Messenger and action in accordance with Allah's Shariah. By the statement, "you prohibit what is wrong", it is implied that you prohibit assigning partners to Allah, falsifying the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him), performing deeds forbidden by Allah.

(Jam'i al-Bayan fi tafseer al-Qur'an, vol. iv, p,28)

Mullah Jeevan says:

تامرون بالمعروف اى بالايمن بمحمد والقران اوبجميع
الطاعات وتنهون عن المنكر اى عن الكفر وسائر المعاصى.

(التفسيرات الاحمدية، ص ١٢٢)

"You enjoin what is right." That is you enjoin belief in Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) and in the Qur'an or you enjoin total obedience to them, "you prohibit what is wrong." That is, you prohibit denying Allah and the Prophet and all other sinful acts.

(Al-Tafseerat al-Ahmadiyyah, p. 124)

In a similar vein, Imam Shaukani comments in his

Tafseer about the Qur'anic order relating to the compulsory existence of a group among Muslims which has to invite people towards Khair, enjoin what is right and prohibit what is wrong.

عن الضحاک فی قوله یأمرون بالمعروف قال یدعون الی
الایمان باللہ ورسوله والنفقات فی سبیل اللہ وما کان من
طاعة اللہ وینہون عن الشرک والکفر (فتح القدیر، جلد ۱، ص ۳۶۳)

Dahak interprets Allah's statement that 'you enjoin what is right' to mean that one should believe in Allah and His Messenger, and spend in Allah's way and invite people to obey all commandments of Allah and the statement that you prohibit what is wrong to mean the prohibition of associating partners with Allah and of denying Allah and His Messenger. (Fath al-Qadeer, vol. 1, p. 364)

After these explanations it is not possible for anyone to deny the fact that, in the eyes of the scholars of this community, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar mean that people may be invited to believe in Allah, His Messenger and the Qur'an and to prevent people from polytheism, atheism, and denial of prophethood. An eminent follower of the Companions, Abul Aaliya, has gone to the extent of saying:

کل ما ذکرہ اللہ فی القرآن من الامر بالمعروف و نہی عن
المنکر فالأمر بالمعروف دعاء من الشرک الی الاسلام
والنہی عن المنکر النہی عن عبادة الاوثان والشیاطین (جامع
البيان فی تفسیر القرآن (ابن جریر، جزء ۱۰، ص ۱۰۹)

Wherever Allah has mentioned Amr bil Maroof

and Nahi anil Munkar in the Qur'an, He has meant by Amr bil Maroof an invitation for people to move from polytheism to Islam and has intended Nahi anil Munkar to mean restraining people from the worship of idols and demons.

(Jam'i al-Bayan (Ibn Jareer), part 10, p. 109)

Amr bil Maroof was a task assigned to the Prophet in Makkah

The most satisfactory way to resolve the question "whether the tasks Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar are missionary in nature or political in import" is to cast a glance at the Prophet's accomplishments and find out if the duty of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar was discharged by him only when he had the reins of government in his hands or even before that. This inquiry is necessary because the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) is a model par excellence for our emulation, We have to take that path which has his footprints and we have to do that which he did. The answer to this inquiry is found in the seventh chapter of the Qur'an in which there is the order of Amr bil Maroof. The chapter was revealed in Makkah and the reference to Amr bil Maroof in that chapter is a clear indication that Amr bil Maroof is the name given to the propagation of faith in an un-Islamic setting. As long as he lived in Makkah, the Prophet preached Islam. He was not a ruler there and he could not have executed the duty of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar through the machinery of the state. This proves not only the fact that Amr bil Maroof includes preaching and persuasion but also the fact that the project of Amr bil Maroof commences with preaching and persuasion.

The political dimension of the project appears later. The reference to Amr bil Maroof occurs in the seventh chapter in this way:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ (الاعراف: ١٩٩)

(O Prophet!) Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and avoid the ignorant. (7:199)

Though 'Urf' is used in the verse quoted above, it is a synonym for 'Maroof' and Maroof, as stated earlier covers the entire gamut of Islam and its Shariah. The Prophet received this order in an environment, dominated by belief in the plurality of gods and entirely hostile in form and temperament to the ethos of monotheism. When he preached monotheism, he brought a hornet's nest about his ears. He was greeted with abuse, sarcasm, and stiff resistance. He had to put up with such a scale of shock and awe that one trembles to conjure it up. The order promoting goodness against such a background is a clear indication that the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) is expected to continuously disseminate the knowledge of Islam and leave no stone unturned in spite of the gravity and delicate nature of the situation. One has to bear in mind that the emphasis is not on any one aspect of Islam. The emphasis is on the holistic presentation of Islam. No aspect of Islam is ignored in this order.

Imam Ibn Jareer Tabari says:

ان الله امرني به صلى الله عليه وسلم ان يامر الناس بالعرف
وهو المعروف في كلام العرب فمن المعروف صلة
الرحم من قطع واعطاء من حرم والعفو عمن ظلم وكل
ما امر الله به من الاعمال او ندب اليه فهو من العرف ولم

يخصص الله من ذلك معنى دون معنى فالحق فيه ان يقال
 قد امر الله نبيه ﷺ ان يامر عباده بالمعروف كله لاي بعض
 معانيه دون بعض (جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن جزء ٩٤ ص ٩٨)

" Allah advises His Messenger to enjoin what is good upon the people. In the language of the Arabs, Urf and Maroof are synonyms ...and Maroof has the following connotation: we have to relate to him who breaks ties with us, we have to pay the dues in full to him who deprives us of our rights, we have to let off that person who commits excesses upon us. Moreover, all those activities which Allah has ordered or exhorted us to do are included in Maroof. Allah has not hinted at any particular aspect of Maroof or confined His order to any thing with a limited range and meaning. Therefore, the most appropriate stance in this regard will be to assert that all things which are included in Maroof should be done by Allah's slaves. Any selective approach to Maroof - ordering a few things of Maroof and ignoring a few others - is not the right approach."

(Jami al- Bayan, part9 p.98)

Khazin and Baghavi have explained 'Amr bil Urf' in a few words but have made this explicit that this order is applied to the preaching of the whole of Islam that Allah revealed to His Messenger (May Allah bless and greet him).

Khazin says:

وامر بالمعروف يعني وامر بكل ما امرك الله به وهو ما عرفته
 بالوحي من الله عز وجل وكل ما يعرفه الشارع
 (لباب التاويل على معاني التنزيل، جلد ٢، ص ٢٤٠)

"Enforce 'Urf'. That is, implement whatever Allah has ordered you. This is inclusive of all those things which you have come to know through 'wahi' (revelation) from God. Whatever the law-giver knows is urf." (Lubab at-Taweel, vol.2,p.270)

Allama Baghvi's words are given below:

وامر بالعرف اى بالمعروف وهو كل ما يعرفه الشرع (معالم
التزويل على هاشم الخازن جلد ۲ ص ۲۷۰)

Urf. That is, enjoining Maroof . It refers to everything that Shariah knows and approves of.

(Ma'alim al-Tanzeel Vol. II, p.270)

Allama Syed Mahmood Aalusi says:

قال عطاء المراد بالعرف كلمة لا اله الا الله وهو تخصيص
من غير داع (روح المعاني جزء ۹ ص ۱۳۷)

Ata is of the opinion that Urf means the holy proposition that there is no other God than Allah but this act of limiting Urf's meaning has no basis, (That is, its wider connotation should remain intact.) (Ruh al-Ma'ani, part 9, p.147)

Nahi anil Munkar is a part of Amr bil Maroof

In the verse 7:199, Amr bil urf is mentioned. Nahi anil Munkar is not mentioned. Likewise, in certain verses and Traditions, Nahi anil Munkar is mentioned, Amr bil Maroof is not mentioned. This is limited to the use of words. Otherwise, the positive aspect of the project implies the negative aspect just as the negative aspect implies the positive aspect too. Alqami says:

الامر بالشىء نهى عن ضده (الأكلیل علی مدارک التزويل جلد ۴ ص ۱۸۹)

Insisting upon a particular thing is (in effect) the rejection of its opposite.

(Al Ikleel ala Madaarik al-Tanzeel, Vol. IV, p.189)

Similarly, in a Hadith, the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has ordained replacement of Munkar but has not referred to its replacement with Maroof. Mulla Ali Qari explains the reason for it in these words:

لأن النهي عن المنكر شامل له اذ النهي عن الشيء امر بضده
(المعين المعين لفهم الأربعين ص ١٨٩)

Because Amr bil Maroof is included in Nahi anil Munkar. It is obvious that when a certain thing is prohibited, it naturally follows that its antithesis is to be enjoined. (Al Mubeen Al Mueen, p. 189)

Prophet Muhammad enjoined Maroof and Prohibited Munkar too

Turning away from this discussion, let us look up another verse in the seventh chapter wherein both Maroof and Munkar are mentioned together.

الَّذِينَ يَتَّبِعُونَ الرَّسُولَ النَّبِيَّ الْأُمِّيَّ الَّذِي يَجِدُونَهُ مَكْتُوبًا عِنْدَهُ
فِي التَّوْرَةِ وَالْإِنْجِيلِ يَأْمُرُهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُحِلُّ لَهُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتِ وَ
يُحَرِّمُ عَلَيْهِمُ الْخَبَائِثَ وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي
كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ فَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا بِهِ وَعَزَّرُوهُ وَنَصَرُوهُ وَاتَّبَعُوا النُّورَ
الَّذِي أُنْزِلَ مَعَهُ أُولَئِكَ هُمُ الْمُفْلِحُونَ (الأعراف: ١٥٤)

(Today this Mercy is for) those who follow the Ummi Prophet, whom they find mentioned in the Torah and the Gospel that they have. He enjoins upon them what is good and forbids them what is

evil. He makes the clean things lawful to them and prohibits all corrupt things and removes from them their burdens and the shackles that were upon them. So those who believe in him and assist him, and succour him and follow the light which has been sent down with him, it is they who shall prosper. (7:157)

Three characteristics of the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) are mentioned in this verse. The first characteristic is that he enjoins what is good and prohibits what is evil. The second characteristic is that he permits pure things and forbids impure things. The third characteristic is that he takes away unnecessary burden and removes fetters. The second and third characteristics are in a way an expatiation of the first characteristic. Permitting pure things is a part of Amr bil Maroof; making impure things unlawful is a part of Nahi anil Munkar. Similarly, the requirements of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar are to take away the burden of self-made and self-imposed rituals and practices from the backs of the people and to emancipate man from every type of enslavement except the enslavement to God.

Imam Ibn Taimiyah says:

هو الذى امر الله على لسانه بكل معروف ونهى عن كل منكر
واحل كل طيب وحرّم كل خبيث ... فبه كمل دين الله
المتضمن للامر بالمعروف والنهي عن كل منكر واحلال كل
طيب وتحريم كل خبيث ... وتحريم الخبائث يندرج فى
معنى النهى عن المنكر كما ان احلال طيبات يندرج فى الامر
بالمعروف لان تحريم الطيبات مما نهى الله عنه وكذلك

الامر بجميع المعروف والنهي عن كل منكر مما لا يتم الا
 للرسول الذي تتم الله به مكارم الاخلاق والمندرجة في
 المعروف (مجموعة رسائل شيخ الاسلام ابن تيمية (الحسبة في الاسلام ص ٦٣)

" It is through the Prophet's tongue that Allah enjoined what is good and prohibited what is evil, and made every pure thing lawful and every impure thing unlawful ... It is through the Prophet that Allah gave a final shape to His religion in which every good thing is enjoined and every evil thing is prohibited, every pure thing is made lawful and every impure thing is made unlawful... Making impure things unlawful is a part of the connotation of Nahi anil Munkar, just as Amr bil Maroof includes the connotation of making all pure things lawful. Allah has therefore prohibited the act of making all pure things unlawful. Similarly the fact remains that the job of enjoining all things that are good and prohibiting all things that are evil is the singular privilege of that Prophet through whom sublime ethics, which Maroof encompasses, has reached its acme.

(collected works of shaikhul Islam, p.64)

Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) addressed every group of people and prohibited every group from doing what is evil

In 7:157, the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is mentioned in the context of the Prophet's work among the Jews. However, it is obvious that he did not limit execution of this project to the Jewish community only. He enjoined upon others too what is right and

forbade them from pursuing evil. The truth is that whether the target groups were Jews and Christians or idol-worshippers and hypocrites, he asked them to follow Maroof and eschew Munkar whenever he preached Islam. As stated earlier, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar applied equally to whatever training he imparted to his companions, whatever lofty ideals he inculcated in them, whatever moral precepts he advised them to uphold, and whatever etiquette of existence he exhorted them to embrace. This work runs like a common thread from the commencement of the mission to its conclusion. As long as life animates his body and as long as energy activates his limbs, the missionary remains engaged in this work. That is the reason why the exegetes did not link the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar to the target group of the Jews only but were of the opinion that the project was varied in nature and wide in scope.

Hafiz Ibn Katheer says:

(يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) هذه صفة الرسول
 صلى الله تعالى عليه واله وسلم في الكتب المتقدمة وهكذا
 كانت حاله عليه الصلوة والسلام ليامر الابخير و لينهى الاعم
 شر ... ومن اهم ذلك ما بعثه الله به من الامر بعبادته وحده
 لا شريك له والنهي عن عبادة من سواه كما ارسل به جميع
 الرسل قبله (تفسير ابن كثير جلد ٢ ص ٢٥٣-٢٥٣)

"He enjoins what is right and prohibits what is evil. This is the Prophet's function according to the earlier scriptures, and indeed that was what he did. Whatever he enjoined, it used to be 'khair' and whatever he prohibited, it used to be

'Sharr'... with regard to this function, the most important element with which he was sent to the world was to enjoin the worship of only one God and to prohibit the worship of any other but Him. Other Prophets preceding him preached the same precept. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, vol. 2, pp.253-254)

Allama Baghvi has this to say on the same excerpt:

(يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ، اِى بِالْاِيْمَانِ (وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ)
يعنى عن الشرك قيل المعروف الشريعة والسنة والمنكر
مالا يعرف فى شريعة وللسنة وقال عطاء يَأْمُرُهُم
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ بخلع الانداد ومكارم الاخلاق وصلة الارحام
وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ عن عبادة الاوثان وقطع الارحام.

(معالم التنزيل على هامش الحازن جلد ۲ ص ۲۳۵)

"He enjoins what is right. That is, he asks people to have faith. He prohibits what is evil. That is, he prohibits the act of associating partners with Allah. Some have said that Maroof stands for Shariah and Sunnah and Munkar refers to that which is unknown and unpopular in Shariah. Ata Tabii explains, 'He enjoins what is right', in these words: He keeps people away from false partners with Allah, he makes people conform to lofty morality, and he asks them to uphold the relatives' rights. Further Ata says that the meaning of the expression, 'He prohibits what is evil', is to prohibit idolatry and violation of the family etiquette." (Ma'alimal-Tanzeel, vol.2 p.245)

Shaikh Ismail Haqqi says:

(يَأْمُرُهُم بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) اى بالتوحيد وشرائع الاسلام (وَيَنْهَاهُمْ

عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) اى عن كل ما لا يعرف فى شريعة ولا سنة.

(روح البیان جلد ۸ ص ۷۸۰)

"You enjoin what is right upon them. That is, you order them to uphold unity of God and Islamic Shariah. You prohibit Munkar. That is, you prohibit everything which is alien and unacceptable to Shariah and Sunnah.

(Ruh al-Bayan, vol. 1p.780)

Ibn Jareer Tabari says:

يامر هذا النبى الامى اتباعه بالمعرف وهو الايمان بالله ولزوم طاعة فيما امر ونهى فذلك المعروف الذى يامرهم به وينههم به وينههم عن المنكر وهو الشرك بالله والانتها عن ما نهى الله عنه
(جامع البيان فى تفسير القرآن جزء ۹ ص ۵۳)

"This Ummi Prophet enjoins Maroof upon his followers. Maroof refers to belief in Allah and compulsory obedience to Him in matters of permission and prohibition. It is this Maroof that the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) enjoined." He forbade Munkar for them." That is, he forbade 'Shirk' and ordered his followers to keep away from things forbidden by Allah."

(Jami al-Bayan, part 9, p.53)

Imam Razi has written a very comprehensive comment on the phrase which deserves to be quoted in full.

مجامع الامر بالمعروف محصورة فى قوله عليه الصلوة والسلام التعظيم لأمر الله والشفقة على خلق الله وذلك لان الموجود اما واجب الوجود لذاته واما ممكن الوجود لذاته اما الواجب لذاته فهو الله جل جلاله ولا معروف اشرف من

تعظيمه و اظهار الخضوع الخشوع على باب عزته .
 والاعتراف بكونه موصوفا بصفات الكمال مبرأ عن النقائص
 والآفات منزّها عن الاضداد والآنداد واما الممكن لذاته فان
 لم يكن حيوانا فلا سبيل الى اىصال الخير اليه لان الانتفاع
 مشروط بالحياة ومع هذا فانه يجب النظر الى كلها بعين
 التعظيم من حيث انها مخلوقة لله تعالى ومن حيث ان كل
 ذرة من ذرات المخلوقات لما كانت دليلا قاهرا وبرهانا
 باهر اعلى توحيده وتنزيهه فانه يجب النظر اليها بعين الاحترام،
 و اما ان كان ذلك المخلوق من جنس الحيوان فانه يجب
 اظهار الشفقة عليه بأقصى ما يقدر الانسان عليه ويدخل فيه
 بر الوالدين وصلة الارحام وبث المعروف فثبت ان قوله عليه
 الصلوة والسلام التعظيم لامر الله والشفقة على خلق الله كلمة
 جامعة لجميع جهات الامر بالمعروف ... قوله وَيَنْهَاهُمْ عَنِ
 الْمُنْكَرِ المراد منه اضداد الامور المذكورة وهى عبادة الاوثان
 والقول فى صفات الله بغير علم والكفر بما انزل الله على
 النبيين وقطع الرحم وعقوق الوالدين.

(مفتاح الغيب) (التفسير الكبير) جلد ۴ ص ۳۰۹-۳۱۰

" These words of the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) "Respect for God's commandments and love for His creation-" encompass all the aspects of Amr bil Maroof. In elaboration it may be stated that existential objects are of two types. One, an object which exists on its own without any support. Two, an

object that stands in need of others for its survival. Allah's existence is the example of the first type and there is no greater Maroof than He is, compelling our reverence and worship, our sense of adoration and submission and our acknowledgement that He is in possession of all the attributes of perfection and devoid of all defects and accidents and that He is far, far superior to have rivals and opponents. With regard to the dependent object, if it does not exist, there is no way it can be helped. To take advantage of help, it is incumbent that the object should be in existence. Still it is imperative that it should be looked upon with respect because it has been created by God and also because every atom of God's creation is an irrefutable proof and clinching evidence of the fact that Allah is one and without any handicap. If the object is a living creature then it becomes imperative that men should treat it with utmost affection. This rule includes treatment of parents with dignity, maintaining cordial relations with relatives and making virtues prevail in society. From this we learn that the Prophet's words - Respect for Allah's commandments and love for His creation - are so comprehensive as to encompass all aspects of Amr bil Maroof... "You keep them away from Munkar." This statement of Allah indicates that whatever is an antithesis of the details given above should be forbidden. The antithesis is inclusive of idol-worship, making an ill-informed discourse on the person and attributes of Allah, rejection of the teachings of the Prophets, violating the code of conduct

pertaining to the relatives, disobedience of the parents.

(Mafatih al-Ghaib (Al-Tafsir al-Kabir) Vol.4, p.309-310)

To sum up the research findings of the scholars: The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) invited people to ponder over the vast universe and recognize their own God. He gave them a correct perspective on God. He taught them lofty morals. He fostered mutual love among them. In addition, he asked those who accepted Allah's religion to worship Allah and to follow the Shariah propounded by Allah and reformed their character. This missionary and training programme of the Prophet is described as Amr bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar by the Qur'an.

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and Warning against misdeeds

Discussion on the training programme will be taken up later. Here the point to be made clear is that the duties of presenting Islam in its pristine purity and inviting the world to follow it are Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar too. It may even be described as an invitation to monotheism, if you so desire because it consists of a refutation of polytheism and a whole system of existence based on it and also because it is based on an established fact the object worthy of adoration is God alone and there is no other person to be worshipped and to be considered God and Ruler. If man refuses to worship God, nothing can save him from destruction and perdition in this world and the next. The Qur'an uses terms like warning, giving glad tidings, conveying the message, and reminder for this task of preaching. As far as the element of persuasion is

concerned, there is no difference between these Qur'anic terms and Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. For example, the term "in thaar" (warning) may be considered. It is frequently used in the Qur'an to describe the mission of the Prophets. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) is described repeatedly as Natheer and Natheer-e-Mubeen (a clear warner). The second or third instalment of revelation (wahi) begins with these words:

يَا أَيُّهَا الْمُدَّثِّرُ ۖ قُمْ فَأَنذِرْ ۚ (المدثر: ١-٢)

You enveloped in your cloak! Arise, and warn.

(74:1,2)

In another place, it is said

إِنَّمَا أَنْتَ مُنذِرٌ وَلِكُلِّ قَوْمٍ هَادٍ (الرعد: ٤)

You are only a warner, and every people has its guide. (13:7)

'Inthaar' is a term originally meant to forewarn about the disastrous consequences of defying God. However, the import of this term is not confined to its negative connotation. The term has a wider connotation, covering the entire gamut of guidance, which is the responsibility that God has imposed upon His Prophets. When this work of inthaar (warning) is efficiently performed and still the target community does not submit to God, then the brief against the community is concluded and the divine wrath descends on it. Keeping this meaning of inthaar in mind and linking semantically both inthaar' and 'Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar', one can note the significance of Imam Ibn Taimiyah's words:

نفس الانذار امر بالمعروف ونهى عن المنكر.

(الحجة في الاسلام-ص ١٤)

The soul of inthaar is Amr bil Maroof and Nahi
anil Munkar.

(Al hisbah fi al-Islam, p.

71)

The breadth of the mission that the phrase Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar connotes is the same as that connoted by inthaar.

Dissemination of religious knowledge among nominal Muslims is Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar too

As already stated above, the missionary work is primarily done among the people who have not yet accepted Islam. With regard to those who have embraced Islam, reform and training are applied to them if there are deficiencies in them. However, if there is an individual or a group, defying Islam or having serious mental reservations about the basic principles and doctrines of Islam, after claiming to be within the fold of Islam, then the missionary work will be made in their case. To all intents and purposes, such individuals have joined the ranks of non-believers in spite of their claim to the contrary.

If the present state of affairs prevailing in the Muslim community is studied deeply, it will become abundantly clear that it requires not only reform and training but also persuasion and preaching to some extent. The community is divided into two sections in practical terms. A numerically advantaged section subscribes to belief in Allah, His Prophet and Life Hereafter and looks upon the Qur'an and Sunnah as the authentic manuals of guidance and is still not free from many errors of attitude and practice. This section does not need an invitation to accept Islam; it needs only a scheme of rectification. The

second section comprises those members of the Muslim community whose faith in Islam may not have been totally annihilated but in their minds the foundations of the faith are undoubtedly shaken. If they are tied to the community it is not because of Allah's Book and the Prophet's Sunnah but because of the social and genealogical contacts which are naturally fostered as a result of living in a group for a long time. In the absence of such contacts, their relationship with Islam and the community might have come to an end. Going farther there are people in this community who not only differ in matters of faith but also ridicule Islam publicly without any scruple. It is obvious that such people require preaching as much as the outsiders.

At the time when the Qur'an was being revealed, the vicious quality of the beliefs and practices of the people of the Book was much worse than the depravity of the present day Muslims. A majority of those people had deviated from and defied God's religion. When the last Messenger of Allah declared that he had been appointed a Messenger from God, the only way of salvation for them was to accept that declaration and join his following because with the advent of a new Prophetic dispensation, the preceding legal systems (Shariahs) become null and void. They are not permitted to cling to their legal system. The scriptures which provided a foundation for their belief system contained clear instructions that they should follow the last Messenger but they preferred to tamper with the scriptures in order to avoid accepting him as a Prophet out of their hostility towards him. In spite of this tampering the people of the Book continued to consider themselves as the followers and standard-

bearers of God's religion, when in reality they had gone out of its pale. However there was a very small group which remained detached from the mass reaction. This group stuck to the straight path and endeavoured to reform the rest. Members of this group prevented others from opposing the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and invited them to believe in his message. The Qur'an acknowledges this service of theirs in the following words: they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong. (3:114)

This makes it quite clear that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is a work of dawah both in the midst of the rejecters of truth and in the midst of one's own people. This does not mean that the righteous group among the people of the Book did not invite outsiders to believe in Allah and His Prophet; this only means that the duty of dawah was carried out by the righteous group among members of their own community. That is the reason why the exegetes did not present dawah work of the righteous group as something specially confined to other members of their community. Instead, they presented it as a work applicable to one and all. That is why Imam Ibn Jareer Tabari elucidates the meaning of the above mentioned extract from 3:114.

يأمرون الناس بالآيمان بالله ورسوله وتصديق محمد صلى
الله عليه وسلم وما جاءهم به و ينهون عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ يقول
وينهون الناس عن الكفر بالله وتكذيب محمد وما جاءهم به
من عند الله۔ (جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن جزء ٢٤، ص ٣٥)

They ask people to believe in Allah and His Messenger and to confirm the religion that the

Prophet has brought to them. They forbid what is evil. That is to say, they ask people not to reject God and not to say that Muhammad and the religion that he has brought from God are false.

(Jami al-Bayan, part IV, p.35)

Jassas says:

صفة لهؤلاء الذين آمنوا من اهل الكتاب لانهم آمنوا بالله
ورسوله ودعوا الناس الى تصديق النبي والانكار على من
خالفه فكا نوا ممن قال الله تعالى كُنتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ
لِلنَّاسِ - (احكام القرآن جلد ۲ ص ۴۲)

'This is the characteristic of the believers from among the People of the Book. They have declared their belief in Allah and His Messenger and have preached to the people to confirm the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and to oppose his opponents. In this way they closed ranks with those people about whom Allah has said, "You are now the best nation brought forth for mankind."

(Ahkamul Qur'an, Vol. 2, p.42)

Knowledge is required for this task

Calling people towards religion is not absolutely a simple and plain activity. It involves sermonising, advice, reminding and exhortation; it involves the art of presenting religion in a purely scholastic manner and reinforcing it with irrefutable arguments too. Rendering service to religion in a logical and sophisticated manner is one dimension of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. It is a well-known fact that the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) was asked to enjoin what is right and

prohibit what is wrong when he was in Makkah and Islam was being presented most forcefully in a convincing manner. He was not merely advising people to accept Islam. On the one hand he was refuting the arguments advanced by the opponents against the religion propounded by God and on the other he was establishing the fact that Islam is the religion of truth and the salvation of the human species lay in following it. All these activities, it should be clear now, constitute a part of the large project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar for whose execution the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) was appointed. Imam Razi says that the exegetes have explained the task of Amr bil Maroof in the following words:

وامر بالعرف اى باظهار الدين الحق وتقرير دلائله

(مفتاح الغيب) (الشفاير الكبير) جلد ۴ ص ۳۴۷

" Enjoin Maroof, that is, this should be done through the elucidation of the religion of Truth and through the corroboration of supporting evidence." (Mafatih al-Ghaib, Vol. IV, p.347)

Ibn al-Arabi Maliki says that the intellectual presentation of Islam and reinforcing it through supporting material are included in the campaign for promoting what is right and prohibiting what is wrong. He puts this idea in these words:

ومن الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر نصره الدين باقامة

الحجة على المخالفين- (احكام القرآن جلد ۱ ص ۱۲۲)

"Defending Islam by means of irrefutable argument against the opponents is a task included in the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi

anil Munkar." (Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. 1, p.122)

The truth is, the wide ranging struggle that characterises the campaign of dawah is an integral part of the project known as Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. The natural and unavoidable consequences of this are: the world should be beckoned towards Islam, and should be barred from disbelief and polytheism and from opposition to the belief in the Prophet and the Shariah. Clinching proofs should be offered to establish that Islam is the true religion and humanity can redeem itself by embracing it. Fortunate are those who are involved in this project; unfortunate are those who have abandoned it as though it were not their duty, and as though the Qur'an were free from any reference whatsoever to this duty.

CHAPTER-VII

JIHAD IN ALLAH'S WAY

Meaning of Jihad fi Sabeelillah

"Jihad fi Sabeelillah" is a technical term of the Shariah, and this refers to the act of spending one's energies fully in the service of Allah. His religion expects that man should place at its altar his life, his assets, his relationships, his fond wishes, his talents, his comforts and luxuries. Without such a sacrifice, Islam can be neither followed nor served. This is the standing order of God:

وَجَاهِدُوا فِي اللَّهِ حَقَّ جِهَادِهِ (الحج: ٤٨)

Strive in the cause of Allah in a manner worthy of that striving. (22:78)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar - a synonym for Jihad fi Sabeelillah

Jihad fi Sabeelillah is a phrase with such a very wide connotation as to encompass the whole project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. When man proposes to establish any Maroof and eliminate any Munkar, he is opting for jihad in the service of Allah. Allama ibn Abideen has this to say about jihad:

هذا عام يشمل المجاهد بكل امر بمعروف و نهى عن المنكر (رد المحتار على الدر المختار جلد ٣ ص ٣٠١)

Jihad is the common term - applicable to every

command for the promotion of any Maroof and to every act of removing any evil.

(Radd Muhtar ala al-Dur al-Mukhtar, Vol. 3, p.301)

One special form of Jihad is to strive with all the force at one's command to make the religion of God triumphant, to rid the world of mischief and anarchy, to ensure social security so as to enable people to worship God without let or hindrance and without anxiety. It is a fact that the use of force becomes unavoidable in the process of removing mischief and disorder and of ensuring the triumph of truth at a time when the world is in dire need of justice and probity. It is a huge crime for people who can remove oppression to remain silent at a time when man preys upon man, when nations and generations groan under oppression, when people are subjected to persecution simply because they want to worship God and regulate their lives according to His wishes.

Waging a war is an offshoot of the project of promoting whatever is good and prohibiting whatever is evil

As long as the Messenger of Allah (May Allah bless and greet him) and his companions (May Allah be pleased with them) dwelt in Makkah, they were not in a position to eliminate evil and to establish Islam and make it dominant. They were the victims of persecution, they were shorn of strength, they were in a tight corner, excesses were committed on them because they were living in accordance with God's religion and were persuading others to do likewise. When this persecution reached its acme, then he and his companions had no other option but to migrate to Madinah. The period of

persecution came to an end after the hegira. When he was equipped with sufficient power which would enable him to eradicate tyranny and oppression by force and to establish the divinely ordained system of justice, he was ordered to wage jihad for the purpose. The Qur'an uses the phrase *Qitaal fi sabeelillah* for this mission. The phrase refers to that war which is waged to please God and to bring supremacy to Islam, and which is a part of the wider project of *Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar*. The explicit order for such a war was given in Madinah but its origins were inherent in the precepts expounded in Makkah. This claim is based on the fact that the order of promoting what is good and prohibiting what is evil had already been given in Makkah. Allama Shatibi says in his book, *Al-Muafaqat fi usool al-Shariah*:

الجهاد الذى شرع بالمدينة فرع من فروع الامر بالمعروف
والنهي عن المنكر وهو مقرر بمكة.

Jihad, which began in Madinah, is one of the adjuncts of the project of *Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar*, the orders for which were passed in Makkah. (Vol. 3, p.50)

Shaikh Abdullah Daraz an authoritative exponent of *Al-Muwafaqat*, adds further:

بل هو اعلى فروع (الموافقات في اصول الشريعة جلد ٣ ص ٥٠)

As a matter of fact, *jihad fi sabeelillah* is the topmost of all the offshoots of *Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar*.

Elucidation by men of erudition

This Jihad is circumscribed by certain conditions and

regulations without which it is by no means permissible to wage it. Those conditions and regulations are not a part of the discussion here. What is proposed here is to prove that just as dawah and propagation of religion are an integral part of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, in precisely the same manner waging a war against those people who are determined to destroy and decimate Islam is equally integral to Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar because without it Islam can never be protected and elevated to a supreme position. In defence of this viewpoint, lucid comments from experts are presented as follows.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with both) says:

كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ يَقُولُ تَأْمُرُونَهُمْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ أَنْ
يُشْهَدُوا أَنْ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ وَالْإِقْرَارُ بِمَا أَنْزَلَ اللَّهُ وَتَقَاتِلُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
عَلَيْهِ وَلَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا اللَّهُ هُوَ أَكْبَرُ الْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَوْنَهُمْ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَالْمُنْكَرُ هُوَ التَّكْذِيبُ وَهُوَ أَنْكَرُ الْمُنْكَرِ

(جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن (طبري) جزء ٢٨ ص ٢٨)

You are the best nation brought forth for mankind. You enjoin what is good. That is, you have to testify that there is no other God beside Allah and you have to confirm that the religion revealed to you is true and you wage Jihad on its basis because the highest Maroof/good is the holy proposition - La ilaha illallah - (There is no other God than Allah) and you keep people away from Munkar, i.e., denial of the existence of God. Denying God is the worst evil.

(Jami al-Bayan, (Tabari), part 4, p.28)

Qaffal, an expert in dialectics , supports Hadrat Abdullah ibn Abbas in the following words.

تفضيلهم على الامم الذين كانوا قبلهم انما حصل لاجل انهم يامرون بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر باكد الوجوه وهو القتال لان الامر بالمعروف قديكون بالقلب وباللسان وباليدين وأقواها ما يكون بالقتال لانه لقاء النفس في خطر القتل وأعرف المعروفات الدين الحق والايمان بالتوحيد والنبوة وأنكر المنكرات الكفر بالله فكان الجهاد في الدين تحملاً لا عظم المضار لغرض ايصال الغير الى اعظم المنافع وتخليصه عن اعظم المضار فوجب ان يكون الجهاد اعظم العبادات ولما كان امر الجهاد في شرعنا اقوى منه في سائر الشرائع لاجرم صار ذلك موجباً لفضل هذه الامة على سائر الامم وهذا معنى ما روى عن ابن عباس ^{رضي}

What distinguishes the Muslim community from the preceding communities is the fact that it executes with skill and finesse the project of enjoining what is good and prohibiting what is evil. That is to say, that in this process of execution the strategy of jihad and war is employed. The task of enjoining what is good may be done with the heart, with the tongue and with the hand. Of these, the most powerful is the method of the swords, as it may lead to fatalities. The topmost Maroof is faith in monotheism and Prophethood; the basest Munkar is denying the existence of God. Therefore, waging Jihad in the cause of Allah is nothing other than putting one's

self to the highest risk in order to extend to others the highest benefit and to protect them from the worst danger. This arguably means that Jihad is the highest act of worship. Now the fact that the status of Jihad is stronger in our Shariah than it is in other Shariahs has brought greater distinction to the Muslim community. This in a way explains the truth of what Hadrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas said. (Al-Tafseer Al Kabeer, Vol. 3, pp. 27-28)

Imam Ibn Taymiyah says:

بين سبحانه ان هذه الامة خير الامم للناس فهم انفعهم لهم
واعظمهم احسانا اليهم لانهمكملوا امرالناس بالمعروف
ونهيهم عن المنكر من جهة الصفة والقدر حيث امروا بكل
معروف ونهوا عن المنكر لكل احد واقاموا ذلك بالجهاد
فى سبيل الله بانفسهم واموالهم وهذا كمال النفع للخلق

(الحجة فى الاسلام ص ٦٣)

Allah has made this point clear that the Muslim community is the best insofar as welfare of humanity is concerned. That is this community extends maximum benefit to humanity and places it under the highest obligation by completing the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar both qualitatively and quantitatively for their benefit. The Muslim community enjoined every Maroof and prohibited every Munkar and performed this duty by striving to the utmost with life and property in Allah's cause. This is the ultimate service and benefit to mankind.

(Alhisbah fi al-Islam, p,64)

Proceeding further in this discussion, he says:

فمعلوم ان الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر واثامه
بالجهاد هو من اعظم المعروف الذي امرنا به

(الحجة في الاسلام ص ٦٦)

It is known on all hands that Muslims have been ordered to enjoin what is good and prohibit what is evil and completing this project through Jihad is among the most significant of the good things that have been ordered.

(ibid., p. 66)

On another occasion Imam Ibn Taymiyah (Rah) says:

ان الله امر المؤمنين بالايمان والعمل الصالح وامرهم بدعوة
الناس وجهادهم على الايمان والعمل الصالح كما قال تعالى
وَلَيَنْصُرَنَّ اللَّهُ مَنْ يَنْصُرُهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَقَوِيٌّ عَزِيزٌ ۝ الَّذِينَ اِنْ مَكَّنَّا
هُمُ فِي الْاَرْضِ اَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَرُوا بِالمَعْرُوفِ وَ
نَهَوْا عَنِ المُنْكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ
(الحجة في الاسلام ص ٨٥)

Allah has ordered the Muslims to live by faith and good deeds. In addition, He has ordered them to invite others to a life of faith and good deeds and to wage jihad for the purpose. Note Allah's words, "Allah will most certainly help those who will help Him. Verily Allah is Immensely Strong, Overwhelmingly Mighty. (We will certainly help) those who, were We to bestow authority on them in the land, will establish Prayers, render Zakah, enjoin good, and forbid evil. The end of all matters rests with Allah,"

(ibid., p. 85)

In support of his claim, Imam Ibne Taymiah (Rah) quotes 22:40, 41. This extract enumerates the duties that the Muslim community has to perform on assumption of

power. (The following chapter throws light on those duties.) The aim here is to prove that Jihad, like preaching, is included in the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar.

Allama Ibn Jareer Tabari says:

وَلَتَكُنْ مِنْكُمْ أُمَّةٌ ... وَيَأْمُرُونَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ) يقول يامرون
الناس باتباع محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم ودينه الذى
جاء به من عند الله (وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ) يعنى وينهون
عن الكفر بالله والتكذيب بمحمد وبما جاء به من عند
الله بجهادهم بالايدي والجوارح حتى ينقادوا لكم
بالطاعة.
(جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن جزء ٢٤ ص ٢٤٧)

And from amongst you there must be a party who ... will enjoin the doing of all that is right ... (3:104) That is, it is the duty of such a party to ask people to obey Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) and to follow the religion that he has brought from God....

"and will forbid the doing of all that is wrong." That is, it is the duty of such a party to wage jihad with might and main to stem the evil of atheism and of the rejection of both Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) and the religion that he has brought until those who spurn and reject give up their resistance.

(Jami al-Bayan, part 4, p.27)

Allama Qurtubi (Rah) says:

إِنَّ أَخْصَّ أَوْصَافِ الْمُؤْمِنِ الْأَمْرَ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَالنَّهْيَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ
وَرَأْسُهَا الدَّعَاءُ إِلَى الْأِسْلَامِ وَالْقِتَالُ عَلَيْهِ
(الجامع لأحكام القرآن جلد ٢٤ ص ٢٤٧)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. This is the chief distinguishing quality of a Muslim. This project has numerous duties. Topping the list are the preaching of Islam and the taking up of arms for it.

(Al-Jamili-Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. 4, p.47)

Imam Razi (Rah) says:

رأس المعروف الايمان بالله ورأس المنكر الكفر بالله
والجهاد يوجب الترغيب فى الايمان والزجر عن الكفر
والجهاد داخل فى باب الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
(التفسير الكبير جلد ٢ ص ٥٢٣)

The greatest Maroof is Belief in Allah; the most deadly Munkar is the denial of the existence of God. Jihad is definitely the means to win over people to believe and to keep them away from non-belief. This jihad is included in the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar.

(Al-Tafseer Al-kabeer, Vol. 4, p.523)

Shamsul Aimmah Sarakhsi says:

وقدسمى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم الجهاد سنام
الدين وفيه امر بالمعروف ونهى عن المنكر وهو صفة
هذه الامة وفيه تعرض لاعلى الدرجات وهو الشهادة
(شرح السمر الكبير جلد ١ ص ١٩-٢٠)

The Messenger of Allah (may Allah bless and greet him) has described jihad as the pinnacle of religion and it is inclusive of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, This is an attribute of the Muslim community. Moreover, it is inclusive of the stage when man presents himself for martyrdom -

a most supreme honour of auspiciousness and prosperity.

(Sharh al-Kabeer, vol. 1, p. 19-20)

Shah Waliullah's Viewpoint

In the eyes of Hadrat Shah Waliullah (Rah) of Delhi, the nomenclature of 'the best nation' for the Muslim community and the expression "Brought forth" for mankind stand for a prophecy that to preach and publicise the objective for which the advent of Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) took place, the Muslim community will fan out to all parts of the world and wage jihad in Allah's cause. While expatiating upon the topic that the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) was gifted with such a comprehensive and complete religion as to abrogate all preceding religions, Shah Sahib (Rah) says that there was an imperative need for the promulgation of Islam at a time when different nations went to war for the cause of religion, the essential truth about religion was lost, and a few rituals survived in its place.

مست الحاجة الى امام راشد يعامل مع الملل معاملة الخليفة
الراشد مع الملوك الجائرة ... وهذا الامام الذى يجمع
الامم على ملة واحدة يحتاج الى اصول ... منها ان يدعوا قوما
الى السنة الرشدة ويزكيهم ويصلح شأنهم ثم يتخذهم
بمنزلة جوارحه فيجاهد اهل الارض ويفرقهم فى الافاق وهو
قوله تعالى (كُنْتُمْ خَيْرَ أُمَّةٍ أُخْرِجَتْ لِلنَّاسِ)

There arose the need of a righteous leader who would deal with different nations in the same manner as a rightly guided caliph deals with

despotic monarchs... The righteous leader aiming at integrating all nations through the unifying power of one religion will stand in need of certain basic principles... One of those principles is a scheme of priorities. He must have first a target group whom he should invite towards the straight Path and reform, and whose conditions he should set right. Then he should transform that group into a strong corps of volunteers with whose help he should struggle against opposing forces and for this lofty ideal he should send them to all regions. This is sum and substance of this declaration of Allah's: You are now the best nation brought forth for mankind. (3:110)

Then Shah Sahib says that at the time when Islam was in the process of revelation, the imperial powers of the Byzantium and Persia dominated the then known civilized world. They held complete sway over thoughts and aspirations, culture and civilization of those times. It was the need of the hour to liquidate those empires and to establish the government of the true religion in their place.

لما اراد الله تعالى اقامة الملة العوجاء وان يخرج للناس امة
 تامرهم بالمعروف وتناهم عن المنكر وتغير رسومهم
 الفاسدة كان ذلك موقفا على زوال دولة هذين متيسر
 بالتعرض لحالهما فان حالهما يسرى في جميع الاقاليم
 الصالحة اويكاد يسرى ففضى الله بزوال دولتهما واخبر النبي
 صلى الله عليه وسلم بان هلك كسرى فلا كسرى بعده
 وهلك قيصر فلا قيصر بعده ونزل الحق الدامغ لباطل

جميع الارض فى دمغ باطل العرب بالنبي صلى الله عليه
وسلم واصحابه ودمغ باطل هذين الملكين بالعرب ودمغ
سائر البلاد بملكهما والله الحجة البالغة

(حجة الله البالغة جلد ١ ص ١١٨-١١٩)

When Allah decided to set right the distortions in religion and to bring forth a community which would enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil and eradicate perverted rituals and customs, the whole plan was dependent on the decline and fall of the Byzantine and Persian empires and its execution would become easy only after they had been neutralised. The impact of their policies was felt fully or considerably on all the civilized countries. So Allah finally decided on their downfall and the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) announced (read, predicted) that Chosroe is finally gone and there will be no more Chosroes and that Caesar is finally gone and there will no more Caesars. And that Truth was revealed which would decimate falsehood throughout the world. This came to pass. First the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and his revered companions neutralised falsehood in Arabia. Then the Arabs neutralised the falsehood of the two reigning empires. Finally, the combined forces decimated falsehood in the rest of the world. Allah alone is vested with the irrefutable argument in favour of truth.

(Hujjatullah Al Baligha, vol.1, pp.118-119)

The truth is that this community is vested with the task of making God's word supreme. Its duty is to replace despotic rule with the kingdom of God. It can be set free

from this duty when it exerts all its energy, and gives away all its intellectual capital in this cause and stakes all its life and property on it. In the language of the Qur'an and the Traditions, such a demonstration is known as Jihad and Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar too.

CHAPTER-VIII

THE ISLAMIC STATE

Note: A comprehensive and detailed picture of the Islamic State is not given here. What is relevant within the limits of the topic is described.

The Need of the Political Power for the project under discussion

Soon after issuing orders with regard to the invitation for Khair and to the project of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil, this instruction is given:

وَلَا تَكُونُوا كَالَّذِينَ تَفَرَّقُوا وَاخْتَلَفُوا مِنْ بَعْدِ مَا جَاءَهُمُ الْبَيِّنَاتُ
وَأُولَئِكَ لَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ
(آل عمران: ١٠٥)

Do not be like those who fell into factions and became opposed to one another after clear signs had come to them. A mighty chastisement awaits them.

(3:105)

The question "why soon after issuing orders to launch the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, the Muslim Community is forewarned against dissipating its energies in mutual discord and antagonisms", is worthy of serious consideration. There may be many reasons but the most prominent and pressing reason is that the duty of enjoining what is good and forbidding what is evil demands in equal measure both persuasive powers of communication and coercive powers of governance. Political power is a thing which requires unity and mutual consent absolutely. It goes without saying that a

strife-torn nation does not deserve political power on God's earth; instead, it is destined for subjugation. It is obliged to live in enslavement to others and it loses the right to establish and to run a political system of its choice. This fact is driven home through this verse for the benefit of the Muslims. It is made clear to them that they can implement the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar only when they have unity in their ranks and mutual affection has transformed them into a monolith. If unity and concord are lost, their political power will suffer a meltdown and it may even be snatched away from them. After that they may continue to implement the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar in the form of an advice but the legal implementation of Maroof and the political curtailment of Munkar will be out of the question.

Imam Razi (Rah) discusses two linkages of this verse. One, it is related to the whole preceding discourse. Two, it is wholly related to the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. Allama Rasheed Rida approves of the first link but prefers the second link. (Tafseer, Al-Manar, Vol. 4, p.48) It is this second link that is reproduced here in the words of Imam Razi (Rah).

انه تعالى لما امر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر وذلك مما
لا يتم الا اذا كان الامر بالمعروف قادرا على تنفيذ هذا
التكليف على الظلمة والمتعالمين ولا تحصل هذه القدرة الا
اذا حصلت الالفة والمُحبة بين اهل الحق والدين لاجرم
حذرهم تعالى من الفرقة والاختلاف لكي لا يصير ذلك سبباً
لعجزهم عن القيام بهذا التكليف (مفتاح الغيب جلد ۳ ص ۲۱)

The order with regard to Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar that Allah has given can be executed by the addressee only when he has the power to enforce the order on the tyrants and the transgressors and he will be equipped with that power when the devotees of truth and men of faith have mutual love and affection. That is why Allah forewarns against dissension and disunity which will render the addressee immobile and prevent him from executing the order.

(Mafatih al-Ghaib, Vol.3, p.21)

Allama Nizamuddin Nishapuri stresses the same link between the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and this verse too. (Gharaaibul Qur'an wa raghaaibrul Furqan, Vol. 4, p.33) Notwithstanding this link between the two verses, there is this point inherent in the order of Amr bil Maroof (enjoining what is good) that an attempt should be made to forge unity in the Ummah and save it from the tentacles of dissension and disintegration, according to Imam Taimiyah (Rah). He says:

من الامر بالمعروف الامر بالتلاف والاجتماع والنهي

عن الفرفة (مجموعه الرسائل الكبيره لرساله السابحه الوصي الكبير، الجزء الاول ص ٣٠٩)

It is Amr bil Maroof to enjoin unity and mutual affection and to forbid disunity.

(Majmua al-Rasayel alkubra part I, p.309)

It is true that in order to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil to the fullest extent, (armed) might and political power are absolutely unavoidable and without unity, political power can be neither attained nor sustained.

It is clear now that the project of Amr bil Maroof and

Nahi anil Munkar has both missionary and political dimensions. It will be more true to say this project is at once preaching and politics. The aspect of preaching had been discussed in the preceding pages; the aspect of politics is now under discussion. Allah has made this point explicit that the first and foremost generation of Muslims would enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil on assuming the reins of government. That is, the truth they campaigned for would be established and they would enforce the principles and doctrines, they sincerely espouse, upon the people. It would not be possible for them to strive for a mission and then ignore it soon after assuming power and to get busy in pampering their fond wishes. Before granting political power to the revered companions of the Prophet's, Allah says:

الَّذِينَ إِن مَّكَّنَّاهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَوُا الزَّكَاةَ وَ
أَمَرُوا بِالمَعْرُوفِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَلِلَّهِ عَاقِبَةُ الْأُمُورِ (الحج: ٤١)

(Allah will certainly help) those who, were We to bestow authority on them in the land, will establish Prayers, render Zakah, enjoin good and forbid evil. The end of all matters rests with Allah.(22:41)¹

(1) The preceding verse deals with the refugees. It may appear as though that in this verse too their qualities are being described. However, it is obvious that the refugees alone are not expected to possess them. The entire community and its various strata should possess these qualities. This is the reason why the exegetes who concentrated on the words alone concluded that this verse refers to the refugees, whereas the exegetes who delved deeper into the semantics and the import of this verse maintained that this verse is applicable to all strata of the Muslim community or the whole community rather. Qatada maintains that the people mentioned in the verse are all the companions. Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas (May Allah be pleased with both) holds the view the refugees, the helpers, and their

The Manifesto of the Islamic State

This verse (22:41) may be treated as the manifesto of the Islamic State as it lays bare the political activity that the Muslim community will engage, in on assuming power. This gives one a holistic view of the purpose why the Islamic state comes into existence, of the ambience of such a state, of the activities that it promotes, and of the direction into which its resources will be channelised. In fact, this brief verse announces in very explicit terms what the fundamental duties are of a government which the faithful establish on their own. To express this truth, Hafiz Abul Barakaath Nasafi and other exegetes of his ilk have given the following interpretation:

هو اخبار من الله عما ستكون عليه سيرة المهاجرين ان
مكنهم فى الارض وبسط لهم فى الدنيا وكيف يقومون
بامر الدين (مدارك التنزيل وحقائق التأويل - البحر المحيط جلد ٦ ص ٣٤٦)

This is a declaration in advance from Allah about the ethical standard that the refugees will display when Allah bestows power and vast material resources upon them and about the way they will discharge their responsibilities in the matters of religion. (Madarik-al-Tanzeel-Al-Bahr-al-Muheet, Vol. 6, p. 376)

followers are mentioned in the verse. 'Ikrima is of the opinion that those who pray five times a day are mentioned in the verse. Hasan of Basra and Abul Aaliya explain that the qualities mentioned are those of the community following the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him). That is to say that if Allah grants them political power, they will establish the institution of Prayer. Ibn Abi Nujayh thinks that the verse discusses the role of the rulers. Dahak says that the verse lays down a condition for those whom Allah grants political power and they are obliged to fulfil it. Allama Qurtubi enumerates all these opinions and gives his preference for the opinion mentioned last. (Vide, Al Jami li-Ahkam al-Quran, Vol 12, p.73)

Personal and Political attributes of the Faithful

In 22:41, four attributes of the people of faith in possession of power and governance are mentioned - establishment of the Prayers, Payment of Zakah, enjoining what is good, proscribing what is evil. The first two of these pertain to the personal character; the second two relate to the collective and political role. Allama Ahmed Mustafa al-Maraghi, a modern exegete, after commuting on the verse under discussion, sums it up in the following words:

انهم هم الذين كملوا انفسهم باستحضار المعبود
والتوجه اليه في الصلوة على قدر الطاقة وكانوا عوناً
لاممهم باعانة فقرائهم وذوالحاجة منهم وكمّلوا غيرهم
فافاضوا عليهم من علومهم وادابهم ومنعوا المفساد التي
تعوق غيرهم عن الوصول في الرقى الخلقى والادب
(تفسير المرافي جزء ١ ص ١٢٠) السامي

These are the people who have perfected their self through concentrating to the maximum extent possible on the Lord and turning their attention towards Him in the act of Prayer and who have helped their communities by rendering assistance to the poor and the needy and who have lent a helping hand to others besides themselves in self actualisation by disseminating to them higher learning and etiquette and by fending them off from those vicious factors which inhibit their access to sublimity of character and standard literature.

(Tafseer Al- Muraghi, part 17, p. 120)

Allama Ibn Jareer Tabari comments on the verse as

follows:

يعنى بقوله إِنَّ مَكَّنَّهُمْ فِي الْأَرْضِ أَنْ وَطَّنَا لَهُمْ فِي الْبِلَادِ
فَقَهَرُوا الْمُشْرِكِينَ وَغَلَبُوهُمْ عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ أَصْحَابُ رَسُولِ
اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ يَقُولُ أَنْ نَصَرْنَا هُمْ عَلَى أَعْدَائِهِمْ
وَقَهَرُوا مُشْرِكِي مَكَّةَ اطَاعُوا اللَّهَ فَأَقَامُوا الصَّلَاةَ بِحُدُودِهَا وَ
آتَوْا الزَّكَاةَ يَقُولُ وَاعْطُوا زَكَاةَ أَمْوَالِهِمْ مِنْ جَعَلَهَا اللَّهُ لَهُ وَ
أَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ يَقُولُ وَدَعَا النَّاسَ إِلَى تَوْحِيدِ اللَّهِ وَالْعَمَلِ
بِطَاعَتِهِ وَمَا يَعْرِفُهُ أَهْلُ الْإِيمَانِ بِاللَّهِ وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ يَقُولُ
وَنَهَوْا عَنِ الشِّرْكِ بِاللَّهِ وَالْعَمَلِ بِمَعَاصِيهِ الَّتِي يَنْكَرُهَا أَهْلُ
الْحَقِّ وَالْإِيمَانِ بِاللَّهِ (جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن جزء ١٤ ص ١١٥)

Were We to bestow authority on them in the land.
"That is, If We allow them to settle down in cities
and they dominate and subjugate the polytheists.
This is a reference to the Prophet and his
companions. It means that if We help them
against their enemies and they triumph over the
polytheists of Makkah, then they will obey Us and
establish the institution of Prayer with all its
accompanying rules and regulations. "They will
render Zakat." That is, they will hand over Zakah
from their assets to all those deserving people
who have been pointed out by Allah." They will
enjoin good." That is, they will invite people to
believe in the oneness of Allah, to obey Allah, to
perform those acts which are recognised as good
and which are popular among the people of Iman.
"And they will forbid evil." That is, they will
prevent people from associating partners with
Allah and from disobeying Him as such

disobedience is most displeasing to those who love truth and faith. (Jami-al-Bayan, part 17, p. 115)

Imam Shah Waliullah (Rah.) of Delhi says:

أَقَامُوا لِلصَّلَاةِ وَآتُوا الزَّكَاةَ اِشَارَةً بِاِقَامَتِ اَرْكَانِ
اِسْلَامٍ۔ وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ شَامِلٌ اِحْيَاءُ عُلُومِ دِينِ رَا وَنَهَوْا
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ شَامِلٌ اِسْتِجْهَادُ كُفْرٍ وَاِخْذُ جُزْيَةٍ رَا اِنَّهُ مَكْرُومٌ زِيَادَةً
تُرَازُ كُفْرُ نَيْسَتٍ وَنَهَى دُرُوعٌ بِالْاِتْرَاقِ اَهْلُ كُفْرٍ وَكَرْتَنُ جُزْيَةٍ نَهَى وَشَامِلٌ
اِسْتِاقَامَتِ حُدُودٍ وَتَعْرِيرَاتٍ رَا بَرِ عَصَاةِ مُسْلِمِينَ۔

(ازلة الخفاء عن خلافة الخلفاء جلد ۱ ص ۲۳)

"They will establish prayer and pay Zakah." There is a hint in this statement that they will erect all the pillars of Islam. "They will enjoin good." This includes the revival of all branches of religious learning too. "They forbid evil." This includes jihad against the non-believers and collection of Jizya Tax from them. Rejecting truth is the most serious evil. Prevention of such an evil entails extreme measures like collecting Jizya tax or confiscating life. Moreover, in the sphere of forbidding evil are included punitive laws of Shariah against those Muslims who defy and flout Shariah. (Izalat al Khafa, Vol.1, p.23)

In connection with the project of prescribing what is known to be good and proscribing what is undesirable, Allama Qurtubi has this to say:

ان الامر بالمعروف لايليق بكل احد وانما يقوم به السلطان اذا
كانت اقامة الحدود اليه والتعزير الى رايه والحبس والاطلاق
له والنفي والتغريب فينصب في كل بلدة رجلا صالحا قويا

امينا ويامرہ بذلك ويمضی الحدود علی وجهها من غیر
 زیادة قال اللہ تعالیٰ الَّذِینَ اِنْ مَكَّنْهُمْ فِی الْاَرْضِ اَقَامُوا
 الصَّلَاةَ... الخ
 (الجامع لاحکام القرآن جلد ۴ ص ۷۷)

Everyone may not be suitable for the job of enjoining the good; the ruler alone can do that job because he alone can enforce the punitive laws and his opinion counts in the composition of the penal code. He alone is authorised to imprison, release or exile a person. Therefore he will have to appoint a righteous, strong and reliable person to the executive post in every city and order him to execute his duty in the most appropriate way without resorting to excesses. Allah declares, "were We to bestow authority on them, they will establish prayer..."

(Al Jami li Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol. 4, p.47)

Imam Ibn Taymiyah (Rah.) says:

الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر لا يتم الا بالعقوبات الشرعية
 فان الله يزع بالسلطان ما لا يزع بالقرآن واقامة الحدود واجبة
 على ولاة الامور وذلك يحصل بالعقوبات على ترك
 الواجبات وفعل المحرمات .
 (الحجة في الاسلام ص ۵۷)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar can not be implemented fully without the enforcement of the punitive laws enshrined in Shariah because those activities which are not brought to a cessation through the persuasive power of the Qur'an are terminated by Allah through the coercive power of the government. It is mandatory upon the rulers to enforce the penal laws and the application of these laws becomes necessary

when the imperatives are omitted and the offences are committed. (Al hisbah fi al-Islam, p.57)

This is what the Qur'an says about the power and governance that the Muslims will exercise. On the one hand they remain obedient and within the limits prescribed by Allah and under no circumstances do they resort to defiance and revolt and, on the other, they perform dawah, preach the message of belief and good deeds, expound the evil consequences of polytheism and sin, revive religious knowledge, enforce the laws of Shariah, punish those who fail to perform compulsory duties and those who commit forbidden deeds. Last but not the least, they wage Jihad in the cause of Allah until virtue replaces vice and good supplants evil, and the world is made safe for the unchallenged supremacy of Islam.

The Project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar demands the full implementation of Shariah

It has to be borne in mind that the excerpts from the scholars quoted above have foregrounded only a few basic issues. It does not follow that the Islamic State has to be content with the observance of Allah's instructions on those issues only. Instead, it is compulsory for that State to obey and serve the faith in its entirety. The project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, a special feature of the men at the helm of affairs in the Islamic State, has a much wider connotation as has been made clear in the foregoing paragraphs. Maroof encompasses every single belief and action that the Shariah has inculcated; Munkar includes all those beliefs and actions which have not found favour with the Shariah. As a result only that strategy which is Shariah - compliant should be adopted in

all the prescribed and proscribed matters. This is the reason for the elucidation that Allamah Muhammad Khateeb Sharbeeni (d.977 A.H.) offered with regard to the special feature of the rulers of the Islamic State:

وَأَمَرُوا بِالْمَعْرُوفِ أَيِ الَّذِي أَمَرَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى بِهِ وَرَسُولُهُ وَنَهَوْا
عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ أَيِ الَّذِي نَهَى اللَّهُ وَرَسُولُهُ عَنْهُ

(السراج المنير، جلد ۲، ص ۵۵۳)

"They will enjoin the good." That is, they will enjoin what Allah and His Prophet have enjoined.

"They will forbid the evil." That is, they will forbid all that Allah and His Prophet have forbidden."

(Al- Siraj al- Muneer, Vol. 2, p.553)

When it is said that the rulers in the Islamic State enjoin the good and forbid the evil, it actually means that they implement the divine Shariah in toto, to the best of their capacity and their whole political system is subject to the divine law.

The purpose of the Islamic State is to enjoin the good and forbid the evil

The main justification for the Islamic State is in the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. It is for this project it comes into existence and it is this project which distinguishes it from other states. When it is understood that the purpose of the Islamic State is Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, it becomes clear that it ceases to be Islamic if the State turns its back upon this project. Ibn al-Arabi Maliki says,

الامر المعروف والنهي عن المنكر الذي مواصل الدين

و خلافة المسلمين (احكام القرآن جلد ۱ ص ۲۹۳)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar constitute the foundation of the Deen and of the caliphate of the Muslims. (Ahkamul Qur'an, Vol. 1, p.293)

Allama Ibn Taymiyah says:

إذا كان جماع الدين وجميع الايات هو امر ونهى فالامر الذي بعث الله به رسوله هو الامر بالمعروف والنهي الذي بعثه به هو النهي عن المنكر وهذا نعت النبي و المومنين

(الحجة في الاسلام ص ۳۷)

Enjoining (Amr) and forbidding (Nahi) are co-extensive with the religion and the official posts. This Amr which Allah sent His Prophet with is Amr bil Maroof and this Nahi which Allah sent His Prophet with is Nahi anil Munkar and thus the distinguishing feature of the Prophet and his followers would naturally be Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. (Al-hisabah fi al-Islam, p.37)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar cannot be described as one of the functions of the Islamic State. In fact that is the whole project of the State for whose execution it presses into service all its resources. Every department has to serve this project and works for it. Allamah ibn Taymiyah and Ibn Qayyim both hold the same opinion:

جميع الولايات الإسلامية مقصودها الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر (الحجة في الاسلام ص ۳۷، لطرق الحكمية في السياسة الشرعية ص ۲۱۷)

The purpose of all official posts in the Islamic state is to promote the good and eradicate the

evil. (ibid., al-Turuq al-Hukmia fi al-Siyasah al-Shariyyah, p. 217)

Imam Ibne Taymiah (Rah.) elaborates this point:

والولايات كلها الدينية مثل امرة المومنين ومادونها من ملك
وزارة و ديوانية سواء كانت كتابة خطاب او كتابة حساب
لمستخرج او مصروف في ارزاق المقاتلة او غيرهم ومثل
امارة حرب و قضاء وحسبة وفروع هذه لولايات انما
شرعت للامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

(الحجة في الاسلام ص ٢٢-٢٥)

All the official posts in the Islamic State have been constituted for Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, whether these posts pertain to the Head of the State/government or a lesser portfolio in the ministry and revenue department, whether these posts pertain to the income from direct taxes or the auditing of the accounts relating to the Mujahideen or whether these posts pertain to the chief of the armed forces, judiciary, ombudsman and all other subordinate departments.

(Alhisbah, p. 44-45)

Social Monitoring is integral to Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar

Just as it is necessary for the Islamic State to keep the finances under the control of Shariah, to subordinate the judiciary to the Islamic statutes, to bring the educational system in line with the Islamic guidelines, it is equally necessary to bring the general religious and moral condition of the community under the scanner of reform and ethical evaluation. The scholars of this

community have taken great pains to deal with this aspect while elaborating upon Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. Allama Ibn Khalldun says

اما الحسبة فهي وظيفة دينية من باب الامر بالمعروف والنهي
عن المنكر الذي هو فرض على القائم بامور المسلمين يعين
لذلك من يراه اهلالة فيتعين فرضه عليه ويتخذ الاعوان على
ذلك ويبحث عن المنكرات ويؤدب على قدرها ويحمل
الناس على المصالح العامة في المدينة (مقدم ابن خلدون ص ٢٢٥)

Moral vigilance comes as a religious duty under the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. The whole project is compulsory for the leader of the Muslims. He will appoint someone about whose eligibility to the post he will satisfy himself and then it will become the official's bounden duty to execute the job in accordance with the well-laid guidelines and he will be assisted by a team of officers. The chief official will monitor what evil things are being perpetrated and apply appropriate punishment and will educate and motivate the people to strive for the common good.

(Muqaddamah, p.225)

With regard to this department of moral vigilance, the scholars have enumerated duties which can be divided under three categories.

1. Religious and moral reform of the community. For example, ordering people to pray, keeping an eye on those who call people to prayers, in order to ensure that there is no mistake, or deficiency or indifference on their part in the discharge of their duties, forbidding unqualified people from airing their views

on the sensitive matters of Shariah. Similarly, being vigilant in order to ensure that no action in defiance of morality and Shariah is committed, as for example talking to unknown women, or promiscuity, etc.

2. Initiating measures in those matters which lie outside the domain of the judiciary or which are of a nature which makes it difficult for the judiciary to take cognisance of, like malpractices in weights and measurement, cheating in trade, adulteration in foodstuff, sale of illegal goods, anti-Shariah business practices, hoarding, etc.
3. Monitoring social welfare schemes like arrangement for adequate water supply, drafting traffic rules and implementing them, construction of shelters for the travellers, providing facilities to the travellers, demolition of unsafe houses without loss of life and property, etc.*

Pure assessment (Ihtisab) is not just an affair of the government; common people have that right too. Even if government officials are in charge of it, common people have a right to information and prosecution of any person, including the social elites with regard to anti-Shariah activities. However the right to prosecute is compulsory for a government official while public interest litigation is voluntary for common people. Allama Mavardi enumerates nine differences between the two types of prosecution. (1) Prosecution is a must for the public prosecutor because the government has imposed such duties upon him whereas such prosecution by a private person is a duty that frees the others from discharging that duty. (2) The public prosecutor cannot divert his

* For details see Al Ahkam al-Sultania, p.231 & further. See Al-turuq al-Hukmiya fi al-Siyasah al-Shariyyah p. 215 & further.

attention to any other errand; the private person is allowed such a diversion. (3) The public can seek help from the public prosecutor in those matters wherein evil has to be nipped in the bud because he is appointed for that purpose. The private person is not appointed to render such a help. (4) The public prosecutor cannot but help the person who seeks such a help. It is not necessary for the private person. (5) Investigation into the occurrence of the serious acts of evil and visiting such places to eradicate evil, finding out where important acts of Maroof are deliberately abandoned and making an effort to re-establish them are a part of the official duty of the government prosecutor. Such investigations are not required of the voluntary prosecutor. (6) A regularly appointed official is approached by people in times of crises and so he is allowed assistants and deputies to discharge the duties easily and proficiently. A voluntary investigator cannot demand such deputies. (see chapter 11 for more details) (7) For ordinary evils, the public prosecutor (Mohtasib) can pronounce a quantum of punishment which should not be equal to the punishment prescribed by Shariah because that punishment the Islamic court only can enforce; the voluntary prosecutor is not empowered to prescribe any punishment whatever. (see chapter 12 for more details) (8) A certain amount is paid as salary from the Baitulmal to the official prosecutor but the voluntary prosecutor cannot claim any remuneration for his service. (9) In matters of well-known conventions and of public good, the Mohtasab can exercise his discretionary powers; this privilege is denied to the voluntary/private prosecutor.

The discussion so far with regard to the sensitivities, categorization and justification of the Islamic State foregrounds this fact that the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is not a voluntary act of the State. It is not free to choose the act or reject it. It is not a matter of inclination; if the state is inclined to perform that act, it may earn some merit or recompense; and if it is not inclined towards it, it may earn no blame. In reality, this project has been ordained by God as an obligatory act. It is the special responsibility of the State to perform it. Let alone the question of overlooking it; it is by no means permissible for the State to be tardy or deficient in the execution of the responsibility: it is the discharge of this responsibility which determines the Islamic nature of the State; it is on this responsibility or lack of it that the religious or irreligious nature of the state depends.

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar:

The Ruler's Burden

The Islamic State has come into existence to implement the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. So it is but natural that the head of the state has to establish and enjoin what is good and eradicate what is evil. If he relinquishes this project, the state loses its *raison d'être*. That is why scholars have ruled that for the head of the state this project is mandatory. Therefore, while explaining the Qur'anic verse 22:41, Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan says:

فيه ايحاب الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر على من مكنته
الله في الارض واقدره على القيام بذلك
(فتح البيان في مقاصد القرآن جلد ٦ ص ١٩٣)

In this verse, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar have been made mandatory for those on whom political power and the strength to bear the responsibility have been bestowed.

(Fath al-Bayan, vol. 6, p.193)

It is not just a compulsory duty but a most compulsory duty to enjoin the good and forbid the evil for the head of the Islamic state. It is because he commands extraordinary powers and the project of promoting the good and proscribing the evil becomes realistic and practicable only when the resources of power and capacity are available. That is why, Imam Ibne Taymiah says,

ذو السلطان اقدر من غيرهم وعليهم من الوجوب ما ليس
على غيرهم فان مناط الوجوب هو القدرة فيجب على كل
انسان بحسب قدرته (الحجة في الاسلام ص ٣٤)

Men at the helm of affairs possess coercive powers, compared to others, to implement the project and so it is incumbent upon them to an extent not required of others. It is the capacity to implement the project which renders the project compulsory. So, all have to implement the project to the extent possible for them.

(Al-Hisbah fi al-Islam p.37)

Imam Shaukani says that if a person in possession of maximum power and capacity does not implement the project he becomes a proportionately greater sinner than others, in the eyes of the Shariah. In an essay, he writes,

من كان اقدر على الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر كان

ذنبه اشد وعقوبته اعظم ومعصيته افظع، بهذا جاءت حجج
الله وقامت براهينه ونطقت به كتبه وابلغته الى عباده رسله
(مجموعة الرسائل المنيرية الجزء الثانى

(الدواء العاجل فى دفع الهدوء الصائل ص ٣)

A person having more powers than others to enjoin the good and forbid the evil and yet not discharging his duty is more fiercely guilty and deserves proportionately more severe punishment. His dereliction of duty is a cognizable offence. God has sent clinching proofs in support of this fact, His scriptures drive home this reality, and His messengers have conveyed this information to His servants.

(Majmua Al-Rasayel Al Muniriya, part II (Al-Dawa al-Aajil, p.3)

Imam Shaukani's assertion is an authentic interpretation of the Qur'an and the Traditions. It is an irrefutable fact that if an ordinary person does not perform the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, it is not so serious an offence as it would be in the case of a ruler. Armed with the powers of governance, he can contribute to the project more easily and more efficiently than others.

Reform of the Rulers is a part of the Project

The Islamic state is a purely governed by Divine law. It is but natural that the man at the helm of affairs in such a state has to be God-fearing, religiously upright, conforming to the norm of goodness, and averse from doing evil. As he is a human being like others, he may occasionally deviate from the norm of goodness and it is human to err too. It may be more true to say that he is

more vulnerable than others to get corrupted and be misled. The question is: If he gives up a Maroof and is guilty of a Munkar, how should Muslims react to such a situation? This is a complex problem. To appreciate it properly, one has to ponder over a few basic principles:

It is the duty of both the state and the citizenry to implement the project. Just as the state has a right to take a citizen to task for deviating from the norm of Shariah, the citizens reserve the right too to question the deviant rulers. At the same time, the citizens are called upon to extend respect and esteem to the rulers. A hadith is given hereunder.

من اكرم سلطان الله في الدنيا اكرمه الله يوم القيامة ومن اهان

سلطان الله في الدنيا اهان الله يوم القيامة (مسند احمد جلد ٥ ص ٣٩٠ و٣٩١)

الترمذى، من اهان سلطان الله في الارض اهان الله (ابواب القتن، باب ما جاء في الخلفاء)

On the Day of Judgement, Allah will treat with respect that person who was respectful towards the ruler elevated to the post by Allah in this world. Likewise, on the Day of Judgement Allah will treat with disrespect that person who was disrespectful towards the ruler elevated to the post by Allah in this world. (Musnad Ahmed, Vol.5, p.49.

Tirmidhi has an abridged version, chapter on Mischiefs)

There is no doubt that it is the responsibility of the subjects to enjoin the good upon the rulers and forbid them to do evil. While discharging this duty they have to ensure that the dignity of the rulers is maintained and they are not humbled and humiliated in public. The following tradition throws light on the procedure.

من اراد ان ينصح لسلطان بامر فلا يبد له علانية ولكن

لِيَأْخُذِيْدَهُ فَيُخْلِبُوْهُ فَانْ قَبْلَ مِنْهُ فِذَاكَ وَالْاَكَاْنُ قَدْ اَدَى الَّذِي
عَلَيْهِ لَهُ (مسند احمد جلد ۳ ص ۴۰۴ مستدرک حاكم)

Anyone who wishes to advise the ruler on any issue should not do so in public. He should hold the ruler's hand and lead him to a lonely place to advise. If the ruler accepts the advice, it is well and good. Otherwise the advisor has completed his responsibility. (Musnad Ahmed, vol.3, p.404)

Imam Ghazali's Viewpoint

There is no controversy as regards the reform of the rulers through advice. This has already been done in different periods. On several occasions this approach has yielded good result. The problem becomes serious when oral criticism and reckoning fall on deaf ears and the ruler persists in his wrong doing. Imam Ghazali (Rah) has this to say on such an impasse:

"If the ruler is guilty of a Munkar on account of ignorance and unfamiliarity, then the citizens will remove the cause. If the matter is something more than this, one needs to pause and ponder. For example, if he has hoarded illegal assets, can they be confiscated and returned to the legal owners? If he wears clothes woven with silk, should the silken threads be removed by force? If he is addicted to drinking, should one trespass into his house to break the containers of wine? If people resort to such actions, there is this fear that the awe in which the ruler is held will be damaged beyond repair and this is strictly prohibited. There is also this fact that absence of reaction against the act of Munkar is not

permitted. The solution to this dilemma lies in assessing how serious the act of Munkar the ruler is guilty of committing is and how much the ruler's authority will be reduced if force is employed to prevent the ruler from his wrong-doing and then appropriate action will have to be taken in keeping with that assessment. The whole matter hinges upon the proper application of the mind or *ijtehad*, for which no precise and clearly-defined directive principle can be devised."

(*Ihya Uloom al-deen*, vol.2, p.280)

There is no doubt that oral advice can be and generally is effective if the head of the Islamic state is guilty of Munkar either on account of inadvertence or ignorance or on a spurt of emotion. Far worse than this, it is possible for a ruler to wantonly abandon Maroofat and to get immersed in forbidden things. There is this danger too that he might press all state resources into service for the elimination of all good things and for the popularization of all evil things. He might spend all his energy in the spread of all evil. All his staff might do likewise and they might connive at and be complicit with others who might become indifferent to religious duties. They might be guilty of doing precisely what is forbidden and might not be inclined to punish those who resort to crime with gay abandon. In such a situation, do the citizens have a right to reform the rulers by force? Should they tolerate the sorry state of affairs with patience and equanimity? Or, should they endeavour to change the state of affairs and replace the evil rulers with rulers of clean character? (From the extract of Imam Ghazzali's given above) his verdict most probably would be that in such a

situation the scruple with regard to the fear of reducing the ruler's authority should be brushed aside and it becomes obligatory that the Munkar should be eradicated by force.

Allama Ibn Hazm's Viewpoint

Both Imam Ibn Hazm and Allama Abu Bakr Jassas have discussed this topic at great length. But to appreciate the discussion one has to bear in mind that it comprises two topics. One, what is the verdict of Shariah with regard to the act of raising the sword against the ruler of the Islamic state for the sake of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar? Two, how should the Islamic state conduct itself if a section raises the standard of revolt?

First the gist of the discussion made by Imam Ibn Hazm is furnished below:

There is a consensus on the issue that the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is obligatory (upon the ruler at any given time and upon the rebels). No individual in the community dissents from it. However some difference of opinion is there on the procedure of implementation. Some followers of Sunnah of the earliest times including a group of the Prophet's Companions and some people belonging to times after them hold the view that the project will be implemented through the role of the heart only and if there is strength it will be orally implemented. Going beyond this, it will not be implemented by employing strength and armed might. This opinion is applicable to a situation when the head of the state is not just. If he is just and impartial, all agree that all should rally behind him to put down the revolt of any irreligious and disobedient individual.

Another group of the followers of Sunnah holds the view that to protect the project one has to raise the sword as a last resort when all other alternatives have been exhausted. They maintain that if truthful men are present as an organized group and it is possible for them to eradicate evil and are not pessimistic about their chances of success, then it is mandatory for them to implement the project by force. But if they are numerically disadvantaged and are not hopeful of success because they are few and weak, then it is permissible for them to renounce the alternative of bringing about a change through the hands and employ the other two alternatives of using the tongue or feeling at heart as their capacity warrants. This is the view of a large number of companions, and the Mutazilites and the Kharijites, and the Zaidiya denomination.

Some of the people espousing the first viewpoint say that there is a grave danger in resorting to violence to further the cause of the project. Bloodshed, looting, acts of disgrace, chaotic conditions, breakdown of law and order machinery - such unacceptable phenomena will spread and their reprehensible nature may get eroded. Others rebut this argument as follows:

A person who is expected to implement the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil has no right whatever to usurp someone's property or to commit aggression upon peace-loving people or to resort to any forbidden act. If he is still guilty of committing a forbidden act, then it is a Munkar which should be changed. If he puts to sword people guilty of Munkar irrespective of their number, he is discharging his obligation. As against this, if people guilty of Munkar kill

people, loot property, rape women, then they are promoting Munkar and it becomes obligatory upon the people to effect a change in such a situation. What the other group describes as unacceptable phenomena should not become a hindrance in the process of replacing Munkar with Maroof and in the execution of *Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar*. When Jihad is waged against militants and insurgents, there will be bloodshed, chaotic conditions etc. On that account will jihad be declared as unacceptable and reprehensible? Suppose, during a jihad, Christians gain an upper hand and imprison Muslim women and children, loot their assets, and disgrace them. Should Muslims not fight then with Christians? Incontrovertibly, Jihad becomes compulsory in such a situation. A little reflection will make it clear that there is no fundamental difference between fighting against the unbelievers and taking up arms against wicked rulers because both reactions qualify for jihad and a beckoning towards the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

When injustice is committed, however trivial it may be,* it becomes necessary to enter into a dialogue with the ruler in connection with it and prevent him from doing it. If he desists and mends his manners or in the matter of securing blood money for murder or implementing the punitive law of Shariah if he shows his willingness, then there is no need to dismiss him from his post. He will continue to be the ruler of the Muslims. If he is not willing to implement the commandments and does not retrace his steps towards the right path, then it is imperative to remove him and replace him with another

* Such a sweeping generalisation may not be altogether right. It is better to keep in mind the stipulated principle of Imam Ghazali cited earlier.

ruler who will establish the rule of law and righteousness. This will be in accordance with the instruction of Allah's.

“تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوُنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ”

(المائدة: ٢)

"And help one another in acts of righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and transgression." (5:2)

It is absolutely not permitted to let a single obligatory duty of Shariah to fall into desuetude.

(Al fisal fi al- milal..., vol. 4, p.170-176)

Allama Abu Bakr Jassas says:

The Viewpoint of Jassas

Scholars and jurists of yore as well as those of the present day never questioned the obligatory nature of the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, except a section of the Hashaviya denomination and the ill-informed among the followers of Hadith. They alone question the propriety of fighting against the rebels and of enforcing the project by armed intimidation. They equate such actions with the vitiation of social harmony, even though they know this statement of Allah:

فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِيَّ إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ (البحر: ٩)

"Fight the one that transgresses until it reverts to Allah's command." (49:9)

The words of this verse explicitly stress that it is necessary to fight against the rebellious group. In spite of this clarity of statement, they maintain that even if the ruler is guilty of forbidden acts like torture and persecution and murder which Allah has forbidden, he

should be exempt from censure. They permit oral censure and physical restraint against the erring person who is not a ruler. Even in that case use of arms is not allowed by them. The fact is that they are more hostile to the community's welfare than the open enemies, because they have restrained people from fighting against the rebels and from impeaching the rulers. Consequently, power has been transferred to the disobedient and rebellious non-comformists, Zoroastrians, and anti-Islamic groups. State borders have become vulnerable to invasion. Persecution is rampant. Urban areas have become insecure. Atheism, exaggeration and deification of people and heretical religious movements have gained ground. All this is the natural consequence of totally giving up the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and of not impeaching a despot. (Ahkamul Qur'an, Vol. 2, p.40)

Imam al-Haramain says:

إِذَا جَارَ وَالِيُ الْوَقْتِ وَظَهَرَ ظُلْمُهُ وَعَشْمُهُ وَلَمْ يَنْزَجِرْ حَرَجِينَ
زَجَرَ عَنْ سُوءِ صَنِيعِهِ بِالْقَوْلِ فَلَاهِلَ الْحَلِّ وَالْعَقْدِ التَّوَاتُعِلَى
خَلَعَهُ وَلَوْ بَشِيرِ الْأَسْلِحَةِ وَنَصَبَ الْحُرُوبِ

(شرح مسلم للنووي جلد ١ ص ٥٢)

If a ruler of a given time resorts to injustice and his torture and injustice are too visible, and if he turns a deaf ear to advice and remains unyielding in the pursuit of evil, then men of wisdom and sagacity should come to a unanimous decision to oust him, be it by means of the sword or by waging a war. (Sharh Muslim, vol. 1, p.52)

Imam Nauwi (Rah) quotes this excerpt and then remarks:

هذا الذى ذكره من خلعه غريب و مع هذا فهو محمول على
ما اذا لم يخف منه اثاره مفسدة اعظم منه

(شرح مسلم للنووى جلد ١ ص ٥٢)

The reference to the ousting of the ruler that Imamul Haramain makes sounds a bit odd. Even then, it is applicable to a situation wherein there is no fear of a far more serious condition resulting thereby than the mischief of the removal of the ruler. (ibid.)

Imam Navavi has not given any supporting evidence for his opinion and remark. Imamul Haramain is not the only one to hold such a view, when, as has been shown, research scholars like Imam Ibne Hazm and Allama Abu Bakr Jassas are supportive of him. As regards the assertion that the ruler will be ousted only when there is no fear of a far more anarchic situation rearing its ugly head, as a result, who can deny that the assertion is most welcome?

CHAPTER-IX**RENEWAL OF FAITH AND
REFORM OF UMMAH****Natural Law governing the rise and fall of nations**

There is no group in the world all of whose members are totally free from evil traits and characteristics and who consistently maintain a sublime standard of righteousness and piety. Every group is indeed an assortment of good and bad people. It is the duty of good and upright people in a group to be ever engaged in the campaign for enjoining the right and forbidding the wrong and in the reform of people with strong evil tendencies to enable them to join the mainstream of goodness. If the good people fail to discharge this duty, evil will be rampant and its fatal influence will engulf the entire nation. People dedicated to the cause of goodness and determined to eradicate evil constitute the elan vital of a nation. When they fall silent, the life force of a nation gets extinguished. The period when nations nurse their moral fibre to grow from strength to strength and perpetually endeavour to get rid of evils from their collective existence marks their rise. Allah allows that group in which good people outnumber the bad people and evil remains confined to a few areas only, to survive on earth and provides it with opportunities for growth, expansion and prosperity. When the wicked people outnumber the good people and vice dominates all areas of existence, then in keeping with the divine law for such

a scenario, the nation proceeds towards decline and gradually becomes extinct. This mobility towards total ruin takes time in general but a wicked nation cannot remain totally secure and strong. The Qur'an expounds this truth in the following verse:

وَاتَّقُوا فِتْنَةً لِّلَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا مِنكُمْ خَاصَّةً (الأنفال: ٢٥)

And guard against the mischief that will bring punishment not only to the wrong - doers among you. (But will be so widespread as to affect all)

(8:25)

Zainab, daughter of Jahash, (Allah be pleased with her) asked the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him), "Will all of us be punished when pious people will be living in our midst?" He replied, "Yes, (this will happen) when vice increases by leaps and bounds."

(Bukhari and Muslim, kitab al-ul fitn)

These holy extracts testify that when the divine scourge descends on nations, it crushes the wicked as much as the good. The point is too general here. There are exceptions and to understand the whole point, a little elaboration is warranted.

Reformers are sheltered by Allah

Some good people take care to be personally good but do not take pains to make others good. They keep off from vices but look askance at social evils. There are other good people who are so proactively good that they are beside themselves when they behold the meltdown of virtue and exponential spread of vices. They live virtuously and popularize virtuous living among others; they abstain from vice and exhort others to do so.

Some scholars say that when divine chastisement is unleashed, along with the wicked people, the two types of virtuous people (mentioned above) are overwhelmed by it too. This is erroneous. It is more true to say that in the widespread chastisement along with the wicked people the first type of virtuous people are killed but the second type is saved. The Qur'an has made this clear that when disobedient people were subjected to punishment, prophets and the believers were saved.

ثُمَّ نُنَجِّي رُسُلَنَا وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كَذَلِكَ حَقُّ عَلَيْنَا نُنَجِّي
الْمُؤْمِنِينَ
(يونس ١٠٣)

Then, (when Allah's wrath falls upon the wicked)
we save our Messengers and also those who
believe. It is incumbent on us to deliver the
believers. (10:103)

Allah's Messengers are sent to reform and guide people and for this they press into service their best talents. They struggle with all their might and ceaselessly against injustice, mischief and corruption indulged in by their respective nations. And so Allah preserves the Messengers from the evil consequences of the crimes which their nations are obliged to face. This is a proof of the truth that the world guides are protected from the divine punishment under all circumstances. It is clearly stated in the Traditions that the good people are clubbed with wicked people as the target group for divine punishment only when the good people give up the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil and do not try to ameliorate the prevailing condition.

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) says:

ما من قوم يعمل فيهم بالمعاصي ثم يقلدون على ان يغيروا ثم
لم يغيروا الا يوشك ان يعمهم الله منه بعقاب

(ابوداؤد، كتاب الملاحم، باب الامر والنهي وروى الترمذي والنسائي بمعناه)

When disobedience against God continues in a nation and there are people who can stop this disobedience in that nation and yet do nothing about it, then Allah will soon unleash general wrath upon that nation. (Abu Dawood, Kitab al Malahim, Chapter on Amr and Nahi; Tirmidhi and Nasai have Traditions with similar meaning)

There is another Tradition:

ان الله عز وجل لا يعذب العامة بعمل الخاصة حتى يروا
المنكر بين ظهرانيهم وهم قادرون على ان ينكروا فلا ينكروه
فاذا فعل ذلك عذب الله الخاصة والعامة (مسند احمد جلد ٣ ص ١٩٢)

Verily Allah does not punish all for the (evil) action of a few, until all see evil in their midst and in spite of authority to stop it they do not censure it. When the whole society adopts this line of indifference, Allah sends down His punishment upon both good and bad.

(Musnad Ahmed, Vol.4, p.192)

These Traditions obviously state that God's punishment targets those indulging in evil acts or those who in spite of possessing the authority to stop the evil acts make no attempt to stop them. This leads to the conclusion that the people engaged in the eradication of evil in a rotten society will remain safe from the divine punishment. Ibn Abi Jumrah, an expert in Traditions, and Allama Qurtubi hold this view. (Fath al-Bari, vol. 13, p.48)

Supporting Evidence from the story of the people who violated the sanctity of the Sabbath

Their opinion is corroborated by the event involving the people who did not observe the sanctity of the Sabbath. Allah had made that day sacred for the children of Israel, who were ordered to keep that day reserved for worship and not for any worldly activity. But, a section of their population dwelling in the coastal area violated the sanctity of the Sabbath and went a-fishing. The Qur'an states that some people admonished the fishing community against such violation and tried to restrain them from doing so. Then a third group remonstrated against the reformers.

لَمْ تَعْظُوا قَوْمًا اللَّهُ مُهْلِكُهُمْ أَوْ مُعَذِّبُهُمْ عَذَابًا شَدِيدًا
(الاعراف: ١٦٤)

"Why do you admonish a people whom Allah is about to destroy or punish severely?" (7:164)

The reformers replied:

مَعذِرَةً إِلَىٰ رَبِّكُمْ وَلَعَلَّهُمْ يَتَّقُونَ (الاعراف: ١٦٥)

"We admonish them in order to be able to offer an excuse before your Lord, and in the hope that they will guard against disobedience." (7:165)

On the question of the Sabbath, the population got divided into three groups. One group wantonly disobeyed God's commandment and broke the Sabbath. The second group tried to change the mindset of the first group and bring it into the mainstream of orthodoxy. The third group did not disobey God but did not strive to warn the first group about the consequences of their open disobedience of God. After making their respective positions clear, the Qur'an states:

وَلَمَّا نَسُوا مَاذُكِّرُوا بِهِ أَنجَيْنَا الَّذِينَ يَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ السُّوءِ وَأَخَذْنَا
الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا بِعَذَابٍ بَئِيسٍ بِمَا كَانُوا يَفْسُقُونَ فَلَمَّا عَتَوْا عَنْ
مَّا نُهُوا عَنْهُ قُلْنَا لَهُمْ كُونُوا قِرَدَةً خَاسِئِينَ
(الأعراف: ١٢٦)

Then, when they forgot what they had been exhorted, We delivered those who forbade evil and afflicted the wrong-doers with a grievous chastisement because of their evil-doing. And when they persisted in pursuing that which had been forbidden We said: "Become despised apes." (7:165, 166)

In these verses, the Qur'an makes explicit two things. One, the disobedient group was visited by punishment. Two, the obedient group which tried to restrain the first group from disobedience was kept safe from punishment. This is a clear proof in support of the theory that, when punishment is sent down by God upon a nation, the people who are engaged in the project of the promotion of virtue and prevention of vice in that nation are kept absolutely safe.

In the incident described above, the Qur'an has not mentioned explicitly about the fate of the third group which did not break the Sabbath and which made no attempt to prevent those who were guilty of breaking the Sabbath. Some scholars hold the opinion that the third group was saved too. Some other scholars disagree and think that the third group shared the fate of the guilty group. The Traditions quoted above support the view held by the latter group of scholars. These Traditions make it abundantly clear that when individuals in possession of the authority to promote virtue and prevent vice do not exercise that authority, they are destroyed along with the

disobedient members of that nation. Allama Showkani says:

... فان كلان من يتاهل للامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
 معرضاً عن ذلك غير قائم بحجة الله ولا مبلغ لها الى عبادته
 فهو شريكهم في جميع ما اقترفوه من معاصي الله سبحانه
 مستحق للعقوبة المعجلة والمؤجلة قبلهم كما صح في قصة
 من تعدى السبت من اتباع موسى عليه السلام فان الله تعالى
 ضرب من ترك الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر بسخط
 عذابه ومسخهم قرده وخنازير مع انهم لم يفعلوا ما فعله
 المعتدون من الذنب بل سكتوا عن ابلاغ حجته و القيام بما
 امرهم به من الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر والحاصل
 انه لافرق بين من فعل المعصية وبين من رضى بها ولم يفعلها
 وبين من لم يرض بها لكن ترك النهي عنها مع عدم
 المسقط لذلك عنهم (مجموعة الرسائل السنية الجزء الثاني والرسالة الاولى الدواء
 العاجل في دفع العدو الصائل ص ٢، ٣)

He, who is qualified to promote virtue and prevent vice and still avoids doing so, who does not establish God's case against the disobedient, and who does not convey the project to God's servants, will be counted as a participant in all the heinous acts that the disobedient people indulge in and consequently will deservingly share the punishment with them both in this world and in the Hereafter. The case in point is the sin of breaking the Sabhath that some people from the nation of Hadrat Musa committed. Allah

punished those people too who ignored the duty of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and distorted their figures into those of monkeys and pigs in spite of the fact that they were not guilty of the crime committed by the transgressors. Their guilt was just this that they did not hold a brief for God and were hesitant to implement the order received from God with regard to Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. The moral from this is that (1) The guilty people, (2) the people appreciating the sin without committing it and (3) the people who, not appreciating the evil themselves, did not forbid it without a valid reason for exemption from that duty - all are on a par. (Majmua al-Rasael al-Muniria Vol. II, p.2-3)

The righteous have to reform the wicked people

On different occasions, the Qur'an has narrated the long struggle between Truth and falsehood. It appears that when a mission espousing Truth commences, the target group gets divided. On the one side, there are people with vested interests who oppose the mission at every step. On the other side, the sincere seekers volunteer to embrace the mission so proactively as to internalize it and each and every act of theirs makes it clear that they serve the mission in all sincerity and are ready to endure all hardships for its sake to the extent that they dedicate their life and their death to the mission alone. This state of affairs does not last long. Slowly but steadily men of principles are replaced by weather-cocks and turncoats who swear by hypocrisy. They pay lip-service to God but they have nothing to do with God. After mentioning some of the prophets, the Qur'an observes in one place,

فَخَلَفَ مِنْهُمْ بَعْدِهِمْ خَلْفٌ أَضَاعُوا الصَّلَاةَ وَاتَّبَعُوا
الشَّهَوَاتِ (مریم: ۵۹)

" They were succeeded by a people who neglected the Prayers and pursued their lusts."

(19:59)

The worthless heirs to trail-blazers prove scandalous to the mission of Truth. Their very presence spells greater disaster to the Muslim community than the hostility of the sworn enemies and history bears witness that such has been the truth on several occasions. It is the duty of those who truly believe in Allah to try to reform such people and to stem the tide of their evil influences. If there is no urge to reform and no anxiety to change the sorry state of affairs, then faith is in real danger. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said:

ما من نبي بعثه الله تعالى في امة قبلى الا كان له من امتهم
حواريون واصحاب ياخذون بسنته ويقتدون بامرهم ثم انها
تخلف من بعدهم خلوف يقولون ما لا يفعلون و يفعلون ما لا
يؤمرون فمن جاهلهم بيده فهو مومن ومن جاهلهم بلسانه
فهو مومن ومن جاهلهم بقلبه فهو مومن وليس وراء ذلك
من الايمان حبة خردل

(مسلم، كتاب الايمان، باب بيان كون النبي عن المنكر من الايمان الخ)

Before my advent, whenever Allah sent a warner to any community, that warner did have helpers and companions who followed the way showed by him and obeyed his orders. After them the people who followed were such that there was a hiatus between their precepts and practices, they did

that for which there was no command. If anyone did jihad with them with his hands, he is a Momin; if anyone did jihad with them with his tongue, he is a Momin too; and if anyone did jihad with them with his heart, he is a Momin too. After this (stage), faith is smaller than the grain of a mustard seed.

(Muslim, kitab al-Iman)

Reforming others leads to self-reform

In a perverted social ambience, there is always a risk of a most virtuous man going astray. The only way he can emancipate himself from its evil influence is to throw his heart and soul into a ceaseless struggle against it. He should become a champion of virtue against vice and he should rush to the place wherever evil rears its ugly head to suppress it. A slight indifference will expose him to the evil influences of the surroundings and he will not remain safe from its corrupting effect. Many a time man gives up all effort to reform on seeing that his advice falls on deaf ears and has no effect whatever, even though this renunciation of advice is self-defeating. When he stops advising as a result of frustration in his struggle against evil, then naturally there remains no dislike in his heart for the vices when that dislike ought to have remained there. Little by little, absence of dislike is replaced by an inclination towards the vices. This inclination grows and grows until the man noted for his hostility against vices becomes notorious for wallowing in sins.

The moral decline of Bani Israel synchronises with the abandonment of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said that

when obscenities began to spread among the children of Israel, initially virtuous people among them used to rebuke them. When their criticism fell on deaf ears and was of no avail, then they kept quiet. Then it so happened that they began to mingle with the amoral people. The result was that the dislike of evil, which is the moral asset of a believer, evaporated from the hearts of the virtuous people. Then there remained none who could call an evil an evil and find fault with it. When things came to such a pass, God ceased to be gracious towards them. Abu Dawood narrates the following:

قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: ما دخل النقص على
 بنى اسرائيل كان الرجل يلقي الرجل فيقول يا هذا اتق الله
 ودع ما تصنع فانه لا يحل لك ثم يلقاه من الغد فلا يمنعه
 ذلك ان يكون اكيله وشريه وقعيده فلما فعلوا ذلك
 ضرب الله قلوب بعضهم على بعض ثم قال لئن الذين كفروا
 من بنى اسرائيل على لسان داود وعيسى ابن مريم

(ابوداود، كتاب الملاحم، باب الامر بالحق وروى الترمذى بمعناه)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said: The children of Israel were brought to ruin in this way. One man would meet another (guilty of a crime) and reason with him, "O slave of Allah, fear Him and stop committing this crime, it is by no means proper for you." (But this advice failed to have the desired effect.) The advisor would meet the guilty one the following day but the guilt would not prevent the advisor from sharing food, drink, and company with the guilty person. As a result, Allah made both of them

temperamentally compatible. [After narrating so far, the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) quoted the following verse (5:78)]

"Those of the children of Israel who took to unbelief have been cursed by the tongue of David and Jesus, the son of Mary."

Bani Israel criticized for not executing the Project

The Qur'an subjects the scholars and the ruling class of Bani Israel to severe criticism because Allah granted them a vantage position in the society so that they could reform the Jewish community. However, they remained indifferent to their responsibilities. The common masses were leading a sinful life in their presence, they were guilty of committing mutual excesses, they cared twopence for the distinction between right and wrong. Still the scholars and the ruling class made no attempt whatever to change the undesirable social conditions.

وَتَرَى كَثِيرًا مِنْهُمْ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَأَكْلِهِمُ
السُّحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا يَفْعَلُونَ ۝ لَوْلَا يُنْهَهُمُ الرَّبُّانِيُّونَ
وَالْأَحْبَارُ عَنْ قَوْلِهِمُ الْإِثْمَ وَأَكْلِهِمُ السُّحْتَ لَبِئْسَ مَا كَانُوا
يَفْعَلُونَ ۝ (المائدة: ٦٣-٦٤)

You will see many of them hastening towards sin and transgression and devouring unlawful earnings. Evil indeed is what they do.

Why is it that their scholars and jurists do not forbid them from sinful utterances and devouring unlawful earnings? Indeed they have been contriving evil. (5:62,63)

Imam Razi (Rah) comments on these verses:

ان الله تعالى استبعد من اهل الكتاب انهم ما نهوا سفلتهم
وعوامهم عن المعاصي وذلك يدل على ان تارك النهي
عن المنكر بمنزلة مرتكبه لانه تعالى ذم الفريقين في هذا الآية
على لفظ واحد (مفتاح الغيب (تفسير كبير) جلد ۳ ص ۳۸)

Allah considers this 'beyond' the scholars of the People of the Book that they did not forbid their subordinates and common masses from sinful life. This highlights the fact that one who commits a forbidden thing and the one who connives at it are both indistinguishable, because Allah has used an identical phraseology (in the concluding parts of both verses) of rebuke for both groups.

(Mafatih al-Ghaib, Al-Tafseer al-Kabeer), Vol. 3, p.38)

Not only this. Imam Razi (Rah) and other exegetes have written that the Qur'an does not come down upon the guilty people so hard as it does upon who do not rebuke and forbid the guilty people. Yamaloon (they do) is the word for the actions of the guilty people. Yasna'oon (they contrive) is the word used for the actions of the scholars who do not forbid.

The criticism directed against the Jewish scholars in these verses of the Qur'an contains a great moral and a great lesson for the Muslim community in general and for the Muslim scholars in particular. They are warned that they will be the target of the same rebuke and wrath if they turn their backs upon their responsibilities and upon the reform of the community. God has no personal affinity with anyone obliging Him to love him in spite of his lapses; He has no personal enmity with anyone urging Him to hate him in spite of his virtues. That is why the

right-minded scholars looked upon this verse as a serious warning given to them. Ibn Jareer says:

كان العلماء يقولون ما في القرآن اية اشدّ توبيخاً للعلماء من
هذه الآية ولا أخوف عليهم منها

The scholars maintain that there is no other verse in the Qur'an which contains a more serious warning for the scholars and which frightens them more.

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Abbas, Dahhak, and Ata Tabiyi have made similar remarks on this verse.

(Jami al-Bayan, vol.6, p.170)

On one occasion, the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) gave the following instruction to the community, after describing the depravity and ruin of the Jewish community:

كلا والله لتأمرون بالمعروف وتنهون عن المنكر ولتأخذن
على يد الظالم ولتأطرنه على الحق أطرا

(ابوداؤد، كتاب الملاحم، باب الامر بالحق)

By no means! By Allah: You must continue to enjoin the good and to forbid the evil. You must continue to restrain the oppressor's hand and to turn him in the direction of Truth.

(Abu Dawood, Kitab al-Malahim)

The first era is the best era for the Muslim Community

The history of the first generation of Muslims provides a lofty ideal and the most perfect model in every sense of the term. From the point of view of ideal service to Islam and of spectacular results, the first era of Islam

is the best for mankind. During that period godliness and goodness prevailed everywhere; truth was dominant and falsehood was suppressed; maroof held court and munkar was crestfallen. Virtue in the place of vice and goodness in the place of mischief reigned supreme. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) maintained the same level of excellence in the domain of dawah as well as in that of the reform of the community. The impact of this blessed era remained in all its purity for a long long duration after him and then gradually tapered off. In other words, the Muslim community registered a downhill trend from the peak of righteousness to the plains of decay. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) employed his prophetic foresight in predicting such a trend. He said,

خيركم قرنى ثم الذين يلونهم ثم الذين يلونهم قال عمران فلا
ادرى قال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم بعد قرنه مرتين
او ثلاثا ثم يكون بعدهم قوم يشهدون ولا يستشهدون
ويخونون ولا يوثقون وينذرون ولا يوفون ويظهر فيهم السمن.
(بخارى، باب فضائل اصحاب النبى مسلم، كتاب الفضائل، باب فضل اصحاب الذين يلونهم في اللفظ لمسلم)

The best period is my period. Then (in decreasing order of importance) comes the period of those who succeed us. Then again comes the period of those who will come after them. [Hadrat Imran, who narrated this Hadith, said that he did not remember whether the Prophet mentioned two eras or three.] The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said that after those eras will come people who would volunteer eagerly to bear testimony but they would not have been called for that purpose.

They would be fond of misappropriation and so nobody would keep the belongings in their custody. They would promise to make votive offering but would not keep it. They would be characterised by obesity - (a phenomenon of luxurious life - style); (Bukhari & Muslim, chapters on the great virtues of the Companions)

It is obvious that the tributes paid to the first generation of Muslims were not unjustified. They deserved the praise because they made huge sacrifices for the sake of Islam and were never indifferent to the need for the reform and training of the community. They were always solicitous of its welfare by advising and wishing the members of the community well. If these virtues ever surfaced in any era, then undoubtedly that era would be laudable, Allama Qurtubi says.

ان قرنه انما فضل لا نهم كانوا غرباء فى ايمانهم لكثرة الكفار
وصبرهم على اذاهم وتمسكهم بدينهم وان اواخر هذه الامة
اذا اقاموا الدين وتمسكوا به وصبروا على طاعة ربهم فى
حين ظهور الشر والفسق والهرج والمعاصى والكبائر كانوا
عند ذلك ايضا غرباء وزكت اعمالهم فى ذلك الوقت
كما زكت اعمال اوائلهم (الجامع لاحكام القرآن جلد ٣ ص ١٤٢)

Special honour was reserved for the Muslims of the Prophet's times because they were aliens in their society on account of their faith. The unbelievers had outnumbered them and the Muslims bore all persecution with patience and remained steadfast in their faith. If members of this community belonging to the later generations establish deen and cling to it tenaciously at a

time when evil, disobedience, mischief, anarchy and deadly sins become too visible, then they would be aliens too in their surroundings and their deeds would be as noble and decent too as those of the distinguished predecessors.

(Al Jamili Ahkam al-Qur'an, Vol.4, p.172)

Poverty of Faith in the initial and final eras

The exalted Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) predicted that Islam appeared as a strange, most unfamiliar and unidentifiable religion at the time of its advent and this history would repeat itself when the times would be drawing to a close. Most blessed are those who would be practising their religion in those times and who would run the risk consequently of becoming alien in their own surroundings.

بدأ الاسلام غريبا وسيعود كما بدأ غريبا وطوبى للغرباء

(مسلم، كتاب الايمان، باب بيان ان الاسلام بدء غريب الخ)

In the beginning Islam appeared as something strange and it would return to that condition. Glad tidings to those (who would be identified with it and known as) strangers. (Muslim, Kitab al-Iman)

Strangeness of Islam in the eyes of the Rejecters

To say that the religion of Islam would become strange in the later period, is to indicate that ignorance was dominant when Prophethood was conferred upon the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him). In the same way ignorance would regain power, perverse ways of thinking would be fashionable, men and advocates of right thinking would be in a minority and contemptuously treated, large

masses of people would not talk of God, and religious practitioners would be too few on the face of the earth. Huge urban areas would be devoid of people who remember God. Man would be too busy to remember God. When the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) was asked to identify those strangers to whom he was offering glad tidings, he replied:

اناس صالحون في اناس سوء كثير من يعصيهم اكثر ممن
يطيعهم
(مسند احمد، جلد ۲ ص ۱۷۷)

A few virtuous people in the midst of the multitude of wicked people: their following would be numerically overwhelmed by their opponents.

(Musnad Ahmed, vol. 2, p.177)

That is, they are the pious slaves of God who kindle a lamp in the darkness and who take upon themselves the burden of world reform. They are not bewildered when falsehood dominates; they endeavour to replace it with Truth. It may not be wide of the mark to describe them as the heirs of the Prophets. The nature of their work is precisely the same as that of the Prophet. The benighted humanity secures guidance through them as it does through the Prophets. Some traditions, therefore, define Ghuraba (people who are not recognized as one of their own by others on account of their religion) in the following words:

الذين يصلحون اذا افسد الناس
(مسند احمد جلد ۴ ص ۷۳)

They undertake reform when people have gone morally corrupt

(Musnad Ahmed, vol. 4, p.73)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) says that these reformers will be outcast in their own

surroundings, people will not be fascinated by their doctrines, their discourses will sound odd, their activities and their ways will be unfamiliar. Their path will be a path of loneliness; they will have no companion and no peer. In spite of these handicaps they will continue their journey to their last moments and in this perseverance lies the key to their success.

Allama Ibn Atheer explains this Tradition thus:

انه (اى اسلام) كان فى اول امره كا لغريب الوحيد الذى لا
 اهل له عنده لقلّة المسلمين يومئذو سيعود غريبا كما كان
 اى يقلّ المسلمون فى اخر الزمان فيصيرون كا لغرباء فطوبى
 للغرباء اى الجنة لاوئك المسلمين الذين كانوا فى اول
 الاسلام ويكونون فى اخره وانما خصّهم بها لصبرهم على
 اذى الكفار اولاً وآخرًا ولزومهم دين الاسلام
 (التهذيب فى غريب الحديث جلد ٣ ص ١٥٢ مادة غريب)

In the beginning Islam appeared lonely like that stranger who is (away from home and) not surrounded by kith and kin because the followers were very few. "And then it would return to the old stage of being a stranger again." That is, in the fullness of time, Muslims would shrink to the status of a minority and thus (in the midst of a majority) would be outcast. "Thus, glad tidings for those who are outcast." That is, Muslims of the early period and Muslims of the later period will be rewarded with paradise. They are chosen for glad tidings in particular because of their patience and fortitude in the teeth of oppressive opposition and because of their steadfast loyalty to Islam. (Al-Nihaya fi gharib al-Hadith, vol. 3, p.152)

These "alien" travellers of Islam will encounter all those hardships which every seeker after truth usually faces. They will be persecuted, attacked with barbs of sarcasm and satire, and deprived of comfort and rest. Where they are concerned, flowers of the garden will turn into thorns so much so that lifelong friends withdraw support and closest relatives will turn into deadly enemies. Earth's hospitality will be denied to them, and they will be outcast in their own homeland. They may even be forced to leave hearth and home in a state of torture. In one hadith, 'ghuraba' is described as **النزاع من القبائل** 'Cast out of tribes.' (Musnade Ahmad, vol. I, p.398) Experts in Hadith identify them with Muhajireen. This one word conjures up a whole picture of strangeness and marginalisation. It can be conceived how rugged the terrain was through which early travellers passed and will be when others would pass last.

Strangeness of the Faith in the eyes of its followers

The strange plight of the religion may be manifest in the form of irreligiosity among its nominal followers. They may be swept away in the flood of falsehood as the atheists are usually swept away, and may lose that strength of convictions which keeps a Muslim strong of limbs to face the challenges. Members of the think-tank among them who can solve problems in the light of religion may be reduced to the minimum. Among them, men of initiative who ascertain the religious viewpoint before initiating any action and who determine their course of action accordingly may be quite few in number. In other words, the putative followers may be in a majority but the people who have a right perspective on religion and who

follow it aright in letter and spirit may be reduced to a minority. It is obvious that in these circumstances on the true servants and genuine loyalists of Islam a pall of strangeness will spread even in the midst of the putative followers of Islam. God and His Prophet will treat this strangeness as blessed. There is a mention of this strangeness in the holy utterances of the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him). When people asked him who the 'Ghuraba' are, he replied,

الذين يزيدون اذ انقص الناس رواه احمد (مدارج السالكين جلد ٣ ص ١٢٢)

(That is, Ghuraba are those people who will be in the vanguard in the matter of piety and adoration of God when others will be lagging behind.)

(Ahmad, vol. 3, p 122)

He added further that they would be righteous in themselves and engaged in the task of making others righteous.

الذين يصلحون ما فسد الناس من سنتي

(ترمذی، کتاب الایمان، باب ما جاء ان الاسلام بدء غريباً وسوء غريباً)

Those individuals will set right the distortion that others would have introduced in my practice.

(Tirmidhi, kitab al-Iman)

This Tradition is couched in the following words:

الذين يحيون سنتي ويعلمونها الناس (مدارج السالكين، جلد ٣ ص ١٢٣)

Those individuals will give a new lease of life to my practice and instruct the people about it.

(Madarijal-salikeen, vol.3, p.123)

Some Tradionists have explained this Tradition, Keeping in mind this aspect. Imam Auzai says.

امانه مايذهب اهل الاسلام ولكن يذهب اهل السنة حتى
مايقي في البلد منهم الارجل واحد

(كشف الكربة في وصف حال اهل الغربة لابن رجب حنبل مطبوعه مصر ١٠)

Undoubtedly it is not Muslims but only those who observe the practice (Sunnah) of the Prophet meticulously that will cease to exist. Things may come to such a pass that there may remain only one in a vast city to observe the sunnah.

(Kashf al-Kurba, (pub.Egypt), p.10)

Imam Ibn Qayyim (Rah.) has discussed this concept of strangeness (ghurbah) at length from the same angle:

"Strange are Muslims among an assorted group, so are men of faith among Muslims, so are men of erudition among men of faith, so are people of sunnah who distinguish between Sunnah on the one hand and desires and innovations on the other among people who innovate. Most strange are those who call people to revive sunnah and who bear patiently the persecution that opponents resort to. The fact is that they are the true devotees of Allah. In reality there is nothing strange about them. Their strangeness becomes prominent only in the midst of the majority of those people about whom Allah has said, "If you obey the majority of those who live on earth, they will lead you away from Allah's Path." (6:116)

Though they are in a majority, they are at odds with Allah, His Messenger, and Islam, and their oddity is extremely bewildering, irrespective of their being well-known and well-reputed, irrespective of their capacity to inspire devotion for themselves among the common people."

Some sentences later, he continues:

"One type of strangeness is that which sets off the believers in Allah and followers of the Prophet's Sunnah from other people; the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has complimented those people who are characterised by it (it is not necessary that this type of strangeness should spread worldwide) and it may be present in one place and not in another, at one particular time and not at some other time, in a particular community and not in another community. However, people characterised by this type of strangeness are definitely men of God because they sought shelter in Him and none else and sought identification with the Prophet and none else and invited others to accept the teachings of the Prophet and not those of others."

Continuing the discourse, he adds:

"That true version of Islam which the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and his companions upheld has grown much stranger than it was at the time of its advent even though its symbols and rituals are well-recognised and famous. People are extremely unfamiliar with the genuine version of Islam and those who cling to it are like odd men out. One may conjure up how small and how alien that party will be against the background of seventy-two sects* with their huge following and enjoying dominion, status, and

* A reference to a hadith in which the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) says that the Jewish community got divided into seventy-two sects and his community will get divided into 73 sects and all but one of them would go to hell. The exempted group would take to the path of the Prophet and his companions.

political power. These sects will be actively hostile to the Prophet's teachings which are at variance with their desires, their pursuit of luxuries, their serious doubts and reservations about Islam which are a climax of their intellectual distinction, and their inner promptings which motivate their aims and objectives. How can the believer, walking towards God following the Prophet's way, not remain a stranger in the midst of the people surrendering to their base desires and obedient to their greed and grabbing tendencies and proudly self-opinionated?"

Continuing the discourse, he says:

"That Momin, whom Allah has endowed with insight into His religion and intellectual understanding of the sunnah of His Prophet, and has also shown him how people have been enslaved by their desires, new and wrong practices and how far they have strayed away from the straight Path traversed by the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and his companions (Allah be pleased with them), may wish to traverse the straight Path. Then he will have to bear with fortitude whatever the ill-informed and the proponents of the new fangled ideas about religion say about him in condemnation, sarcasm, contempt and fault-finding. They may go to the extent of making people hate him and fear him. Their conduct towards him will be exactly similar to the conduct of the enemies towards his leader and model (May Allah bless and greet him). If he calls them towards the Straight Path and exposes their wrong behaviour, then he will be touching the

hornet's nest. They will play all sorts of tricks upon him, spread a net of fraud to entangle him, and pounce on him with their hordes. In the matter of faith he will be an odd man out in their midst, because their faith would have been distorted. In the matter of upholding the sunnah, he will be an odd man out because they will be clinging to the new-fangled rituals. In the matter of true dictrines, he will be an odd man out because their doctrines and beliefs would be wrong and false. In the matter of Prayers, he will be an odd man out, because their Prayers would be erroneous. In the matter of practice he would be an odd man out because they would be pursuing wrong practices. In the matter of alliance, he would be an odd man out because he would be allied to Allah's Messenger (May Allah bless and greet him) and they would be allied to pretentious leaders. In the matter of social responsibility, he would be an odd man out because he would treat them in a way much against their expectations. In short, in all matters pertaining to this world and to the hereafter, he will be unique and strange and without a helper and collaborator. He will be a scholar in the midst of ignoramuses, a follower of sunnah in the midst of Sunnah-deviant people, a beckoner towards God and His Prophet in the midst of people who make a fetish of selfish pleasures and new-fangled theories. He will enjoin the good and forbid the evil in the midst of the people whose good will be evil and whose evil will be good."

(Madarij al-Salikeen, vol.3, p.123-126)

All this discussion makes it clear that there is an

aspect of singularity and strangeness involving the risk of being excluded from his own flock when they are straying away from the path shown by the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him). In these circumstances, all those who strive to stick to the Prophet's sunnah and to revive it are absolutely fortunate. At the same time it should not be forgotten that sunnah does not refer to some particular aspect of the Prophet's life and that it has a holistic connotation encompassing the whole way of life as lived by him. In other words, Sunnah represents the whole system of doctrines and deeds towards which he dutifully called people. So one can claim to uphold sunnah only when he conforms to the whole system including doctrines and deeds. One who believes in the Prophet's teachings should believe without entertaining doubts and mental reservations. One who acts in accordance with that belief-system should act without the admixture of selfish inclinations. Ibn Rajab Hanbali says:

اما السنة الكاملة فهي الطريقة السالمة من الشبهات و
الشهوات كما قال الحسن ويونس بن عبيد وسفيان
والفضيل وغيرهم (كشف الكربة في وصف حال اهل الغربة مطبوع مصر ١٢)

Perfect Sunnah is the name given to the way which is safe from the intrusion of doubts (in the matter of beliefs) and of predilections (in the matter of action), as suggested by Hadrat Hasan Basri, Yunus bin Ubaid, Sufyan Thauri, Fudail bin Ayad (May Allah be merciful towards them all).

(Kashf al-Kurba, pub. Egypt, p.12)

The order to obey Sunnah in turbulent times

The times wherein 'deen' becomes neglected and marginalised are known in the Traditions as turbulent times because they pose an ordeal to man's capacity to think and act. During those times, such catastrophic crises rear their ugly heads that sometimes even men of courage and sincerity do not remain totally unaffected. The crises burst like hurricanes and shake the edifice of beliefs and actions. This community has been repeatedly subjected to such turbulent times and its faith has been sorely tried. Even today it is passing through trying times when atheism has thrown down a gauntlet to its ideology, morality and forms of worship, culture and civilization, social and political structures. There has always been only one way to come off with flying colours in turbulent times - Stay the course which has the indelible footprints of Muhammad of Arabia (May Allah bless and greet him) and of his august companions. An extract of the Prophet's sermon is given below:

من يعيش منكم بعد فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بسنتي
وسنة الخلفاء الراشدين المهديين تمسكوا بها وعضوا عليها
بالنواجذ واياكم ومحدثات الامور فان كل محدثة بدعة وكل
بدعة ضلالة (رواه احمد والبيهقي والترمذي وابن ماجه) (مكتوبة المصاحف، كتاب الايمان، باب
في الاعتصام بالكتب والسنة)

Anyone of you who may survive me may witness many disputes. It will become your duty then to strictly conform to my Sunnah and to that of my rightly guided and righteous successors. You must remain firm and catch hold of it and not let it go. You must distance yourself from all attempts

to introduce new beliefs and practices (changing the very identity of Islam), because to innovate in religion is to manipulate it. All such manipulation (bid'a) is arguably an instance of going astray.

(Mishkat al-Masabih, kitab al-Iman)

The exalted Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has extolled the virtue of avoiding bid'a and of pursuing and reviving sunnah during the period of disputation. Two Traditions with lucid contents are given below:

من أحیی سنة من سنتی قد امتیت بعدی فان له من الاجر مثل
اجر من عمل بها من الناس لا ینقص من اجور الناس شیئا (ابن
ماجه، مقدمه باب امن احیی سنة قد امتیت، ترمذی، کتاب العلم، باب الاخذ بالسنة واجتناب البدعة -
(الترغیب والترہیب ج ۱ ص ۵۲)

Anyone who revives any one of my abandoned sunnahs after my departure will get a recompense equal in quantum to the recompense that all those who observed that sunnah are eligible to get without reducing their recompense in any manner,

(Ibn Maja, Muqaddamah; Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Ilm; the integrity of one of the narrators Kathir Ibn Abdullah has been questioned and Hafiz Munthari defends the tradition because there are other supportive Traditions)
Al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb, vol. 1, p.52)

المتمسک بسنتی عند فساد امتی له اجر شهید
(رواه الطبرانی - (الترغیب والترہیب جلد ۱ ص ۴۴) (التیسیر بشرح الجامع الصغیر جلد ۲ ص ۵۴)

At a time when my ummah is subject to decline, anyone who clings tenaciously to my sunnah will merit the reward of a martyr. (Tabrañi. Its authenticity is questioned (Al-Targheeb wa tarheeb, vol. p.44) but

defended by Allama Munawi in Tayseer, interpretation of Al Jami al- Sagheer, vol.2, p.454)

Another version of this Tradition is as follows:

من تمسك بستى عند فساد امتى فله اجر مائة شهيد (رواه باهقى
(الترغيب والترهيب ج ١ ص ٢٢٢)

At a time when my ummah is subject to decline anyone who clings tenaciously to my Sunnah will merit the reward of a hundred martyrs. (Baihaqi, Al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb, vol. 1 p.44. One of the narrators through whom this hadith has come is of dubious integrity. vide Lisan al- Meezaan, vol.2, p. 246)

Ghudaif Ibn Harith Thamani says:

ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم قال ما احدث قوم بدعة الرفع
مثلها من السنة فتمسك بسنة خير من احدث بدعة
(مسند احمد ج ٢ ص ١٠٥)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said that whenever a nation starts an innovation in religion (bid'a), its corresponding sunnah is taken away (from that nation). Therefore, seize hold of the sunnah. It is better than inventing a new thing in religion.
(Musnad Ahmad, vol. 4, p.105)

Abdullah Ibn Deilami (a Tabi'i; according to some, a companion. Tahzeeb At Tahzeeb, vol.5, p.358) says:

بلغنى ان اول ذهاب الدين ترك السنة بذهب الدين سنة
كما يذهب الجبل قوة قوة (دارى، مقدمه، باب اتباع السنة)

"This reached me (from the Prophet) that the beginning of the end of Islam would be signalled by the abandonment of sunnah. One sunnah

after another will be abandoned as one strand of the rope is separated from another."

Thus religion will fully disintegrate. (Darimi, Muqaddamah)
Because of this, it is said in another Tradition.

من وقرصاحب بدعة فقد اعان على هدم الاسلام (رواه البيهقي في
شعب الايمان مرسل مشكوة المصابيح، كتاب الايمان، باب في الاعتصام بالكتاب والسنة)

To respect an innovator against Law is to contribute to the demolition of Islam.

(Mishkat al-Masabih, Kitab al-Iman)

At the advent of Islam, conformity to sunnah appeared odd. Similarly, it is odd today. It goes without saying, however, that only those people will reach the destination who have the grit and determination to conform to sunnah and to eradicate every innovation against Law. Imam Zuhri says:

كان من مضى من علمائنا يقولون الاعتصام بالسنة نجاة
(داري مقدمه، باب اتباع السنة)

Our Scholars of the past used to maintain that there is salvation only in conforming to sunnah.

(Darimi, Muqaddamah)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar consists in facing crises and challenges

Conformity to sunnah implies that man should constantly abide by the religion of God that Prophet Muhammad presented to the world, that man should make every possible attempt to invite the world towards it and to make it dominant and well-established, and to resist with might and main all anti-Islamic movements and challenges. Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar

encompass completely this whole project, and people have been constantly working at it in this community. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has predicted that there will always be people enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, and resisting all anti-Islamic plots, during the closing period.

سيكون في اخر هذه الامة قوم لهم مثل اجر اولهم يامرون
بالمعروف وينهون عن المنكر ويقاتلون الفتن
(رواه، البيهقي (مكتوبة المصانح، كتاب الفتن، باب ثواب هذا الامة)

There will be people during the closing period who will get a reward that will match the reward of the people of the early period and who will enjoin the good and forbid the evil and oppose anti-Islamic conspiracies. (Mishkat al-Masabih, kitab al-Fitu)

The Prophet has put this idea in another way:

ان من امتي قوما يعطون مثل اجر اولهم ينكرون المنكر
(مسند احمد جلد ٢ ص ٦٢)

Some members of my Ummah (belonging to the closing period) will get a reward similar to that which people of the early period will get because they will criticise evil. (Musnad Ahmed, vol.4, p.62)

The Community will always boast of the presence of the Defenders of the Faith

Through Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) the world received the religion of God for the last time and God proposes to retain this religion to the end of times. That is why, He goes on creating the defenders of Islam in every epoch, and will continue to do so. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has

predicted that even though there will arise many religions and moral evils among the followers of Islam and they may even emulate the evil practice of the preceding religious communities, there will persistently remain a group which will preserve the religion in its pristine purity, which will resist the attacks on Islam whether they are launched by the followers or by the foes, and which will defeat all attempts to distort the religion. The speech of the group will represent truth, and it will champion truth in front of the champions of falsehood. In the process it will neither lose courage nor be shocked and awed. For the sake of Islam it will resist at every front and continue to make the biggest sacrifice. Anyone who is not with this group will be humiliated; anyone who is against it will be frustrated.

لاتزال طائفة من امتي قائمة بامر الله لا يضرهم من خذلهم
او خالفهم حتى ياتي امر الله وهم ظاهرون على الناس
(مسلم، كتاب الامارة، باب قوله لاتزال طائفة من امتي ارخ)

There will always persist an organized group in my Ummah to discharge the responsibilities imposed by God's religion. Anyone who parts company with it or opposes it will do it no harm until the advent of the Doomsday and the conditions will be such that it will be dominant,

(Muslim, Kitab al-Imarat)

Imam Bukhari says that the group, mentioned in this hadith, will be the group of scholars, (Bukhari, kitab al-I'tisam) Imam Nauwi has read a wider meaning in this hadith. He says:

يحتمل ان هذه الطائفة مفرقة بين انواع المؤمنين منهم

شجعان مقاتلون ومنهم فقهاء ومنهم محدثون ومنهم زهاد و
 أمرون بالمعروف وناهون عن المنكر ومنهم أهل أنواع
 أخرى من الخير ولا يلزم أن يكونوا مجتمعين بل قد يكونون
 متفرقين في أقطار الأرض (شرح مسلم، مطبوعه المطابع، دلهي جلد ۲ ص ۱۴۳)

It is possible that this group may be spread out in different sections of the Muslims. The group may comprise courageous soldiers fighting in Allah's way, scholars of jurisprudence, Traditionists, pious men, people who who enjoin the good and forbid the evil, and people who render good service in other fields. This Tradition does not insist that this group is found in one region only. It is possible for them to be found scattered in different parts of the world.

(Sharh Muslim, pub, Asah al-Matabi, New Delhi, vol.2, p. 143)

In another Tradition, the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said.

يحمل هذا العلم من كل خلف عدوله ينفون عنه تحريف
 الغالين وانتحال المبطلين وتاويل الجاهلين
 (رواه البيهقي (مكتوبة، كتاب العلم)

Men of justice in every generation will uphold this (religion of) knowledge by eliminating from it the deviation made by the transgression, the false claims made by the worshippers of falsehood and the interpretation offered by the ill-informed.

(Al-Baihaqi, Mishkat, kitab al- Ilm)

This common service is described by him as the regeneration of the ummah. He says:

إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَبْعَثُ لِهَذِهِ الْأُمَّةِ عَلَى رَأْسِ كُلِّ مِائَةِ سَنَةٍ مَنْ يُجَدِّدُ
لَهَا دِينَهَا (ابوداؤد، كتاب الملاحم، باب ما يذكر في القرن المائة - مستدرک حاکم، جلد ۴ ص ۵۲۲)

Towards the close of every century Allah will definitely bring forth in this community gifted individuals who will regenerate this religion for this community's welfare.

(Abu Dawood, Kitab al-Malahim, Mustadrak Hakim, vol. 4, p. 522)

Such regenerators in this community preserved this religion in its pristine purity on the one hand and guarded the community from collective decadence and deviation from the Straight Path on the other.

History is witness to the fact the teachings of some of the prophets who preceded Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) were totally lost forever and the teachings of some others were so tampered with by their followers that they have become a pot-pourri of true and false teachings. But the religion Prophet Muhammad presented to the world is still extant in its genuine shape and its proponents are ubiquitously available. Whenever any conspiracy against Islam raised its ugly head, defendants came forward and smashed it definitively. The commitment to the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil might have occasionally waned among the followers of Islam but never came to an end. That is why any attempt to finish or reformulate Islam did not succeed. The sincere servants and true mouthpieces of Islam resisted every deviation, every false claim, every misinterpretation of Islam, and made the biggest sacrifices in its defence. The fact of the matter is that Islam had been subjected to such formidable attacks both from within and without that by now it should have

become either totally extinct or misshapen beyond recognition.

Similar is the fate of this community. Whenever any vice emerged in it, forces of reform emerged too and removed it. During its 1400 years long history, the community in its entirety did not become apostate and did not have a general consensus on the option of going astray and losing the way, The Prophet had predicted:

ان امتى لاتجتمع على ضلالة

(ترمذى، ابواب الفتن، باب فى الزوم الجملة - ابن ماجه، ابواب الفتن، باب السواد الا عظم)

Verily, my community will not show solidarity on the issue of apostasy/ misguidance.

(Tirmidhi, Chapter on fitna)

This prediction has stood the test of time so far and we are sure in future too, its veracity will be further corroborated.

The whole community is called upon to undertake self-reform and regeneration of faith

There is no doubt that reformers continued to emerge in this community and successfully performed the difficult task of defending the faith and reforming the community during the most critical periods. After admitting this fact, there arises a very important question: Is the duty of protecting the community from becoming rotten and of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil incumbent upon every member or upon a particular group? The Qur'an replies as follows:

وَالْمُؤْمِنُونَ وَالْمُؤْمِنَاتُ بَعْضُهُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ بَعْضٍ يَأْمُرُونَ
بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَيَنْهَوْنَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَيُقِيمُونَ الصَّلَاةَ وَيُؤْتُونَ

الزَّكَاةَ وَيُطِيعُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ أُولَئِكَ سَيَرْحَمُهُمُ اللَّهُ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ
(التوبة: ٤٠)

"The believers, both men and women, are allies of one another. They enjoin good, forbid evil, establish Prayer, pay Zakah, and obey Allah and His Messenger. Surely Allah will show mercy to them. Allah is all-Mighty, All-wise." (9:71)

This verse clearly establishes that the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil and the issue of reforming the community are not the responsibility of a particular section or group. The responsibility devolves upon the whole community. The Qur'an envisions a situation in which every Muslim is engaged in the project of mutually enjoining the good and mutually forbidding the evil. This is the ideal situation. If one individual does not have this quality, he is the most incompetent member of the Muslim society. Imam Ghazzali says:

فقد نعت المؤمنين بانهم يأمرون بالمعروف وينهون عن
المنكر فالذى هجر الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر خارج
عن هؤلاء المؤمنين المنعوتين فى هذه الآية

(احياء علوم الدين جلد ٢ ص ٣٢٠)

Allah has listed this quality of the Muslims in this verse (9:71) that they enjoin the good and forbid the evil. So any Muslim who ceases to enjoin the good and forbid the evil has opted out of the group of the Muslims mentioned in this verse.

(Ihya Uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.340)

Allama Abdul Qadir Audah Shaheed says:

ان جمهرة الفقهاء توجب الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر

على كافة افراد الامة لاعلى فئة معينة منها

(التشريع الجنائي الاسلامي، الجزء الاول، ص ٢٩٥)

Most of the scholars of jurisprudence maintain that the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is obligatory upon all the members of the community and not just upon a particular group.

(Al- tashree Al Jinaai, part, p.495)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and Counselling each other to hold on to truth

The project of ordaining the good and forbidding the evil is in reality an act of reforming the Muslim community. The Qur'an uses another expression for this work and it is counselling each other to hold on to truth and counselling each other to be steadfast. After faith and righteous deeds, this mutual counselling to uphold truth and patience holds the key to the success of nations and communities, according to the Qur'an, chapter 103.

وَالْعَصْرِ ۝ إِنَّ الْإِنْسَانَ لَفِي خُسْرٍ ۝ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالْحَقِّ وَتَوَاصَوْا بِالصَّبْرِ ۝
(العصر: ١-٣)

By the time! Lo! Man is in a state of loss, save those who have faith and do righteous deeds, and counsel each other to hold on to truth and counsel each other to be steadfast. (103:1-3)

Haq or Truth includes the whole of Islam and Sabr means steadfastness in the pursuit of religion. So, counselling each other to hold on to truth and Counselling each other to be steadfast will mean exhorting each other to live up to the ideals of Islam in a steady manner. It is necessary for the reform of the

Muslim community and the uncompromising attachment to Islam that the emotional involvement in the job of mutual exhortation to uphold the values of truth and patience should be kept intensely alive. This is the way to prevent the emergence of evil within the society and to allow no space for its unchecked growth in case the evil still manages to emerge. As long as this emotional involvement in the job of mutual exhortation to uphold the values of truth and patience remains open for the community and the boat of the community will be kept on an even keel even after tossing up and down in the turbulence of evil. If this emotional involvement disappears, corruption will emerge and eat into the vitals of the Muslim society and the possibility of retrieval and amelioration of the Muslim society will be foreclosed. It is obvious that nothing then can prevent the total annihilation of the society.

Islam is duty-bound to foster an ambience in the society which will be conducive to the unhindered growth of 'khair' or goodness and unsparingly hostile to the spread of evil. When a person chooses to traverse the path of virtue, then he must feel at every step that the whole society is acting in his favour and facilitating his onward mobility. If he rather chooses to take to the path of evil, then he must immediately get the impression that he has become a persona non grata and that there is none to keep company with him. It must be easy for him to uphold 'Maroof'; pursuing 'Munkar' should cost him dear. There is a standing order that there should be mutual cooperation in matters of virtue and piety and that no helping hand should be extended in collective acts of crime and mayhem.

وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا تَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ

(المائدة: ٢)

"Help one another in acts of righteousness and piety, and do not help one another in sin and transgression." (5:2)

The strategy to keep this community on the Straight Path, as suggested by the Qur'an and the Traditions, is that its members should be subjected to strict monitoring, opportunities and resources for the rapid growth of righteousness should be provided, utmost energy should be expended to eradicate evil. Love for righteousness and contempt for evil should be so intense in the community that even if one individual dared to commit an indiscretion, ten persons should step forward to oppose him and bring him to his senses. Helping a man does not merely mean that one should help him to do good; it means too that he should not be allowed to go far on the path of recklessness. That is why, the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said,

انصر اخاك ظالما او مظلوما قال يا رسول الله هذا نصره

مظلوماً فكيف نصره ظالما قال تاخذ فوق يديه

(بخارى، ابواب المظالم والمقاصص، باب ان اخاك ظالما او مظلوماً)

"Rush help to your brother, whether he is an oppressor or a victim." It was said to the Prophet, "When the brother is an innocent victim, we will (surely) help him. But if he is an oppressor, how shall we help him?" The Prophet replied, "Restrain his hand (and thus stop his oppression)."

(Bukhari, chapter on oppression)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and Mutual Advice

Another synonym in the Qur'an and the Hadith for the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar being executed in the midst of the Muslim community is "Naseehah". This word has a very wide connotation. The lexical meaning is - avoiding deception and dissimulation, behaviour characterised by sincerity, removing the grime from an object, and crafting and decorating. It should not be difficult to assess how wide the connotation is from the range of meanings given. Allama Ibne Atheer says that one word is not sufficient to explain the meaning, a sentence like the following may help, one seeks the best for the person to whom advice is tendered. (An Nihaya, vol. 4, p.148) In this desire for the best are included invitation to faith, moral improvement, training in the skill of thinking and practice.

Islam expects all its followers to be in possession of qualities like mutual goodwill and self-improvement so that the whole society comprises members with those qualities. On the one hand the ruler should try to reform the subjects and on the other the subjects should point out the ruler's deficiencies. The rich should remove the weaknesses of the poor; the poor should remove the vices of the rich. The scholars should save the common people from the evil of ignorance and the common people should draw the attention of the scholars to their own lapses. In this way a climate of sincere advice and mutual goodwill should be so built up as to ensure an automatic mechanism for self-reform. The responsibility of reforming whatever defect or distortion that occurs in the community should rest with the community alone and not

with the outsiders. Every member of the community should entertain best wishes and goodwill for another. The anxiety for one's own training and improvement should be extended to the training and improvement of the co-religionists. Hadrat Tameem Dari says.

ان النبى صلى الله عليه وسلم قال: الدين النصيحة قلنا لمن؟
 قال لله ولكتابه ولرسوله ولائمة المسلمين وعامتهم
 (مسلم، كتاب الايمان، باب بيان ان الدين النصيحة)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) observed that "Deen" stands for sincerity and goodwill. When asked, "For whom?", he replied, "For Allah, for His Book, for His Prophet, for the leaders of the Muslims and Muslim masses."

(Muslim, Kitab al-Iman)

The Hadith has beautifully delineated the sublime feelings which flow out spontaneously on embracing 'Deen'. It talks of sincerity and goodwill which has two aspects - One addresses the personal faith and belief-system and personal reform and nurture, and the other addresses the vast programme of dawah and preaching, reform and coaching people within the community and without. This Hadith presents the Deen and its requirements before us in a special way and so the Traditionists have given it great importance. Imam Navavi has studied what the scholars before him have said on this Hadith and then has given his interpretation. The gist of that interpretation is given below:

"Sincerity towards Allah implies that one should believe in Him, associate no partners with Him, accept His attributes in toto without prevarication, and believe that He is endowed with perfection in every aspect and

that He is devoid of any shortcoming, and one should obey Him in every matter and avoid disobeying Him and that one should love another for His sake and one should hate another for His sake, and that one should look upon God's friend as one's own friend and God's enemy as one's own enemy, and that one should be ready to wage jihad when necessity arises against one who does not believe in Him and who rebels against Him, and that one should sincerely acknowledge all the favours received from Him and be grateful to Him. Sincerity towards Allah also implies that people should be invited to have a perspective on God similar to what has been stated earlier in this passage and they should be persuaded tenderly and affectionately to accept the invitation and believe in God."

Sincerity towards the Book implies that the Book should be accepted as a revelation from God and as different and distinct from every human composition and that no one can ever attain the capacity to match its eloquence. Sincerity towards the Book requires that it should be revered and read with humility and piety that one should gain familiarity with its commandments and comprehend the branches of learning and similitudes associated with it, and profit by its didactic discourses, and reflect upon its unique features, act upon its clear and lucid verses (Muhkamat) and accept the ambiguous verses (Mutashabihat) unquestioningly and delve deep into the commandments and their classification. Moreover, sincerity towards the Book includes the dissemination of the treasures of knowledge contained in the Qur'an and an invitation to the world to consider them.

Sincerity towards the Prophet encompasses the following: confirming his Prophethood, belief in his

teachings, obeying his orders, assisting him during his lifetime and after his departure, being hostile towards his enemies and friendly towards his friends, reviving his sunnah, propagating his message, popularising his Shariah, defending it against false propaganda, and disseminating the forms of knowledge associated with it, and reflecting upon its semantics, inviting people towards the Shariah, learning and teaching it with caution and skill, avoiding discussion about it without knowledge, respecting those who follow the Shariah sincerely. Likewise, sincerity towards the Prophet demands that we should emulate his edifying morals, adopt the etiquette shown by him, love his companions and the members of his household and keep a distance from people who are not enamoured of Sunnah.

Sincerity towards the leaders of the community can be realized when we cooperate with and obey them in the matter of truth, when we gently and, when necessary, strictly advise them, when we avoid flattering them, when we bring to their notice what they are not aware of, when we convey to them matters affecting Muslims which they are not able to access by themselves, when we do not rebel against them without justification, when we persuade people to obey them (in Maroof). Khattabi says that the term 'leaders' may include religious scholars too. In that case, Muslims should have a positive attitude towards them and obey them in matters pertaining to religion and its orders.

Sincerity towards common Muslims should be reflected in the following way: we must guide them towards prosperity in this world and the Hereafter, remove their difficulties, make them aware of the things of this world and religion which they are not aware of, we

must guide them through words and actions too, we must conceal their shortcomings and remove their weaknesses, we must not be jealous of them, we must choose for them what we choose for ourselves and what we dislike for ourselves we should dislike for them too, we should protect their lives, property and honour, we should raise their moral level and motivate them to worship and serve God." (Sharh Muslim, vol.I,p.54)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) gave so much importance to goodwill towards common Muslims that on occasions he would take a special oath of allegiance from his companions. Hadrat Jareer bin Abdullah said:

بايعت النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم على النصح لكل مسلم
(مسلم، كتاب الايمان، باب بيان ان الدين النصيح)

I was pledged to the welfare of every Muslim, in
the presence of the Prophet. (Muslim, Kitab al- Iman)

This gives one a fair idea of the extraordinary importance that the duty of the reform of the community and of extending sincerity and goodwill to the entire Muslim community enjoys in Islam. This duty can be rendered under certain conditions and regulations and there is a question besides of the resources to be utilised and of the resources which cannot be utilised. In the pages that follow a detailed discussion is provided. Though the discussion is related in particular to this reform of the community, it will throw light on the vast project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil and on the conditions, limits, etiquette, resources and means of the project.

CHAPTER-X

CONDITIONS

It is not merely necessary that the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil should be executed at a particular time, in a particular environment, and during a particular period but the nature of this project is such that at no point of time can it ever be neglected. Imam Ghazali says:

عموم الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر يقتضى الوجوب
بكل حال.
(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۱)

(Verses and Traditions pertaining to) the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil are so common and persistent that it implies its mandatory nature under all circumstances.

(Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.281)

However, scholars of jurisprudence have made it clear that it is under certain specific conditions only that the project can be implemented. There is a consensus among them with regard to certain conditions and there is some difference with regard to other conditions. Imam Ghazzali has stipulated five conditions: (1) a person must be theologically qualified (2) must have faith, (3) Justice (righteousness and piety) (4) Political power* or

* Imam Ghazali has not mentioned political power/government as a pre-condition. Instead he has mentioned only permission granted by the ruler of the time. When Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar become unexceptionable with the permission of the government, it is obvious then that the project cannot become exceptionable or wrong if the government implements it by itself. Moreover, some other scholars have mentioned government as a precondition. Details follow:

permission from the government (5)** and implementing authority. These can be further classified into two broad divisions. Faith, justice and governance may be grouped under the category of validation whereas competence and authority (the first and the last conditions) may be grouped under the category of indispensability. Without faith, justice and governance Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar cannot be valid; when a person is qualified or competent and has authority, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar become absolutely essential. Otherwise the project loses its essential nature. All conditions will be discussed at length to establish how far they are acceptable. The conditions of validation will be taken up first.

** In Ihya uloom al-Deen vol.2, pp.274-284, Imam Ghazali has mentioned these conditions in relation to the duties of crime- investigator-cum-magistrate. His duty is Ishtisab about which Imam Ghazali says:

هي عبارة شاملة للامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر (ص ٢٧٤)

This duty includes Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. (p.274)

Allama Mawardi says:

الحسبة هي امر بالمعروف اذا اظهر تركه ونهي عن المنكر اذا

اظهر فعله (الاحكام السلطانية ص ٢٣١)

Ihtisab includes enjoining the good when it has been neglected and it includes forbidding the evil too when it has been committed. (Al Ahkam al-Sultaniya, p.231)

There is no doubt that Ihtisab is a department addressing the issue of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. However, Ihtisab should not be equated with Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar which has a much vaster meaning and scope. Ihtisab aims at internal reform whereas Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar includes along with internal reform, dawah and preaching, Jihad and politics. The conditions relating to Ihtisab are the conditions relating to the work of internal reform and not basically relating to Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. However, as Ihtisab is a part of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, the conditions pertaining to one are equally acceptable to another.

Conditions of Validation

Iman/Faith

The first condition to be fulfilled for the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is faith. It is the duty of a believer to execute the said project. The reason given by Imam Ghazali for this is:

هذا النصرة للدين فكيف يكون من اهله من هو جاحد لأصل

(احياء علوم الدين جلد ۲ ص ۲۷۴)

الدين

It is an assistance to faith. And so, how can that person qualify for this project when he rejects and violates the basics of Islam?

(Ihya ulcom al-Deen, vol.2, p.274)

As Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is a project in support and defence of Islam, it naturally follows that those who profess to follow this religion alone are eligible to launch and execute it and it is their own responsibility. Those who do not follow this religion are neither suitable nor responsible for it. Allama Abdul Qadir Audah Shaheed says that it demonstrates the tolerance of Islam when this religion exempts non-Muslims from the task of executing this project. He reasons that

"Maroof and Munkar encompass the whole of Shariah. If the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is made obligatory upon a non-Muslim, it will mean that his belief-system should be identical with a Muslim's belief system and his utterance should be the same as that of a Muslim. It is obvious that this would be tantamount to the violation of the Qur'anic declaration. "Let there be no compulsion in

religion" and this violation has no sanction in Islam. Through this condition, non-Muslims living in an Islamic state are given full freedom to hold on to any belief they like and to reject any belief they like to reject. There will be no compulsion of any kind."

(Al-tashree Al Janai, p.497)

Justice

Some people maintain that it is imperative for any activist of the project to cling to Maroof and to keep away from Munkar. If he does not do so, he loses the right to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. The Qur'an and the Traditions are unsparing in the criticism of those people who advise others to do good and who are not good themselves. There is a hiatus between what they preach and what they practise. Allah says:

(البقرة: ٢٢٢) أَتَأْمُرُونَ النَّاسَ بِالْبِرِّ وَتَنْسَوْنَ أَنْفُسَكُمْ

Do you enjoin righteousness on people and forget your own selves? (2:44)

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا لِمَ تَقُولُونَ مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ كَبُرَ مَقْتًا عِنْدَ اللَّهِ
(الصف: ٣٢) أَنْ تَقُولُوا مَا لَا تَفْعَلُونَ

Believers, why do you profess that which you do not practise? It is most loathsome in the sight of Allah that you should profess what you do not practise. (61:2,3)

In a similar vein there is a severe condemnation of preachers who do not practise what they preach. These are illustrations from the authentic sources. Even rationally speaking, words do not speak louder than actions. It is improper for a person to rouse others to action when he

himself prefers to remain inactive because the act to discipline one's own self should precede the advice to others to discipline themselves. The pursuit of the Straight Path and the persistence in faith form the core and its offshoot will be guiding others and exhorting them to be steadfast in holding on to faith. If the core is absent, how can the offshoot survive? The real wealth is the righteousness of an individual; reforming others can but be the Zakath on that wealth. If the real wealth is not available, on what else can Zakath be paid?

Imam Ghazali retorts:

كل ما ذكره خيالات وانما الحق ان للفاسق ان يحتسب
وبرهانه هو ان نقول هل يشترط في الاحتساب ان يكون
متعاطيه معصوماً عن المعاصي كلها فان شرط ذلك فهو
خرق للاجماع ثم حسم لباب الاحتساب اذ لا عصمة
للصحابة فضلاً عن دونهم (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٤٥)

Whatever these people have said are nothing but their opinions. The truth is this that a person deficient in the practice of faith has a right to admonish and exhort. In proof thereof, I ask, "Is it a prerequisite that one who proposes to advise and harangue others has to be totally and absolutely sinless? If this condition is laid down, it will be an act of opposition to the consensus of the ummah and, what is more, it will be an attempt to close the door of Ihtisab once and for all, because, let alone the commoners, even the distinguished companions are not protected from sin."

(Ihya, vol.2, p.275)

When people lay down a condition of piety and righteousness for people involved in the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, they don't mean that such activists should be absolutely free from every major and minor sin; they expect such activists to be in possession of major virtues and to keep off from major vices. Imam Ghazali finds fault with this stance too. He says this condition is of little value when it is known that a drunkard is allowed to participate in Jihad and he has been participating in it and that an adulterer can advise a person not to murder. Imam says that a distinction has to be made between committing a sin and advising others not to sin. Blurring this distinction is unreasonable. The following words he puts in the mouth of a sinner:

يجب على الانتهاء و النهى فمن اين يلزمنى من العصيان
 باحدهما ان اعصى الله تعالى بالثانى واذا كان النهى واجبا
 على فمن اين يسقط وجوبه باقدا مى (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۷۵)

It is obligatory on my part to refrain from sinning and to forbid others from sinning. I disobey one part of my obligation; how does that make it necessary that I should disobey God in the second part of my obligation too? When forbidding evil is a duty binding upon me, how do I forfeit that duty simply because I am guilty of committing an evil?

(Ihya, vol.2, p.275)

Imam Ghazali formulates a basic principle in this connection:

اصلاح الغير لايراد لاصلاح النفس ولا اصلاح النفس

لإصلاح الغير فالقول بترتب أحدهما على الآخر تحكم

(أحياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٤٥)

No one seeks moral improvement of others with the intention of securing it for one's own self and one does not seek one's own moral improvement in the hope of improving others morally thereby. To assert that one is dependent on another is an unsubstantiated claim. (Ihya Vol. II, p.275)

The fact of the matter is that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is a permanent duty and to discharge it there cannot be any prior condition that only when other duties have been performed, this duty can be taken up for performance. Every compulsory duty fixed by the Shariah has to be discharged when the time to perform it arrives. That is its inherent quality, whether attention is being paid to other duties or not.

Allama Abu Bakr Jassas expresses this idea in his own words.

ان ترك الانسان لبعض الفروض لايسقط عنه فروضا غيره،
الترى ان تركه للصلوة لايسقط عنه فرض الصوم وسائر
العبادات، فكذلك من لم يفعل سائر المعروف ولم ينته
سائر المنكر فان فرض الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
غير ساقط عنه
(أحكام القرآن جلد ٢ ص ٢٠)

Ignoring certain duties does not entail abrogation of certain other duties. You see, if a man gives up praying (Salath), fasting and other acts of worship are not abolished as a result. Similarly, if a person does not perform all good deeds and does not keep away from all evil deeds, on that

score that duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is by no means rendered void.

(Ahkamul Qru'an, vol.2, p.40)

The problem of preaching by a person who does not practise what he preaches deserves to be considered from another angle. The worldly experience makes it clear that advice tendered by men of integrity is effective because they practise what they preach and their character mirrors their principles, whereas the propagation by louts usually becomes infructuous and ineffective. Let us suppose that a man without character gets convinced at a particular time that his attempt to enjoin the good and forbid the evil will yield no result. The question is: In such a situation, does this compulsory duty remain compulsory? Will he be subject to accountability for dereliction of duty? Imam Ghazali says:

من علم ان قوله لا يقبل في الحسبة لعلم الناس بفسقه فليس
عليه الحسبة بالوعظ اذ لا فائدة في وعظه فالفسق يورث في
اسقاط فائدة كلامه ثم اذا سقطت فائدة كلامه سقط وجوب
الكلام
(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲، ص ۲۷۶)

When a man realizes that on account of his unprincipled life, his social censure will fall on deaf ears, then he need not try to set things right through his sermons and advice, because such advice may not turn out to be profitable. His rebellious life effectively neutralises the profitability of advice. When his oral advice loses effectiveness, then it ceases to be a compulsory duty for him. (Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.276)

This verdict is applicable to oral advice only. Amr bil

Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar can be enforced through the exercise of coercive power. The condition that the advising agent should be virtuous and God-fearing does not apply to this method of enforcement. If a morally wayward person has power, then he must use it to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. Imam Ghazali says,

اما الحسبة القهرية فلا يشترط فيها ذلك فلا حرج على
الفاسق في اراقة الخمر وكسر الملاهي وغيرها اذا قدر
(احياء علوم الدين، ج ٢ ص ٢٤٦)

(Piety and virtue) are not required for ethical enforcement (Ihtisab) through power. A moral non-conformist can throw away the wine and smash the instruments of recreation if he has power and it will cause him no harm. (ibid.)

As stated earlier, some scholars have stipulated, that virtue and piety are necessary to undertake the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, on the basis of the two extracts from the Qur'an, 2:44, 61:2,3. Imam Ghazali has this to say about them:

اما الايات التي استدلو بها فهو انكار عليهم من حيث تركهم
المعروف لامن حيث امرهم ولكن امرهم دل على قوة
علمهم وعقاب العالم اشد لانه لا عذر له مع قوة علمه
(احياء علوم الدين، ج ٢ ص ٢٤٦)

The scholars have based their stipulation on the verses of the Qur'an. In those verses criticism is directed against those preachers who do not practise from a particular perspective and it is this that they have ceased to act according to Maroof. The criticism is not from the perspective

that they are enjoining the good. When they enjoin the good, it implies that they have the power of knowledge. (And, in spite of that when they do not live up to the ideals of Maroof, then it is obvious that) punishment for a scholar will be extremely severe because of the power of knowledge, he is not left with any excuse. (ibid.)

In this connection, Hazrat Sayeed Ibn Jubair (May Allah be pleased with him) has made a remark which is realistic and natural. He says.

لو كان المرء لا يأمر بالمعروف ولا ينهى عن المنكر حتى
لا يكون فيه شيء ما امر احد بمعروف ولا نهى عن منكر

If there is this condition for Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar that the man (undertaking this project) should be without any shortcoming, then no person can enjoin the good and forbid the evil.

Imam Malik, on hearing this remark, agreed saying,

صدق، من ذا الذى ليس فيه شيء (تفسير ابن كثير، جلد ١ ص ٨٥)

(Sayed bin Jubair) spoke the truth as (it goes without saying) that there is no man without any shortcoming. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, vol.1, p.85)

This is the legal aspect of the issue. However, as far as the principle that there should be no hiatus between precept and practice is concerned, its significance cannot be denied. Hafiz Ibn Katheer says:

ذهب بعضهم الى ان امر تكب المعاص لا ينهى غيره، وهذا
ضعيف ... والصحيح أن العالم يأمر بالمعروف وإن لم يفعله،

وينهى عن المنكر وان ارتكب ... لكنه والحالة هذه مذموم
على تركه الطاعة وفعله المعصية لعلمه بها ومخلفته على
بصيرة فانه ليس من يعلم كمن لا يعلم (تفسير ابن كثير، جلد ١ ص ٨٥)

Some people are inclined to think that a sinner can not forbid others to commit evil but this opinion is hardly tenable..... The true viewpoint is that a man of knowledge can enjoin the good even if he does not do what he advises and can forbid the evil. even if he does what he is forbidding, but he, when his position is such, is worthy of condemnation because he has wantonly disobeyed and resorted to sin and adopted an attitude of defiance in spite of deep knowledge. It is obvious that a man who knows is not on a par with one who does not know.

(Tafseer Ibn Katheer, vol.I, p.85)

It is an act of open ridicule if one preaches to others on the one hand and acts in opposition to what he preaches on the other. This injures the prestige of religion and the glory of religion is darkened thereby. Not to practise what one preaches is a proof of the weakness of the profession of faith and reduces the weight of what one says. The Qur'an demands that one should put into practice what one advocates and that hypocrisy should be avoided as there will be a mismatch between the words of angelic innocence and the deeds that will shame the devil. Hadrat Shu'ayb (peace be to him) was God's Messenger and he was conveying God's religion to the people. He stresses the importance of the message by saying that he keeps away from the evils that he forbids his addressees to commit in the hope that they should not dismiss his

teachings as the exhortation of a preacher who does not set an example to others.

وَمَا أُرِيدُ أَنْ أُخَالِفَكُمْ إِلَىٰ مَا أَنهَاكُمْ عَنْهُ إِنْ أُرِيدُ إِلَّا
الْإِصْلَاحَ مَا اسْتَطَعْتُ
(هون: ٨٨)

Nor do I desire to act contrary to what I admonish you. I desire nothing but to set things right as far as I can. (11:88)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) predicts about a preacher whose actions belie his words that on the Day of Judgement he will be thrown into hell and he will roam there. Other people in hell will ask him in surprise:

أَلَسْتَ كُنْتَ تَأْمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَتَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ

Are you not the one who used to enjoin the good and forbid the evil? (Then, how come you are here?)

He would reply:

إِنِّي كُنْتُ أَمُرُ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَلَا أَفْعَلُهُ وَأَنْهَىٰ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَفْعَلُهُ
(بخاری، کتاب الفتن، باب الفتنة التي تموج كموج البحر)

"Undoubtedly, I used to enjoin the good but I used to act otherwise; and I used to forbid the evil but committed it myself." (Bukhari, Kitab al-Fitan)

Government or its permission

Some scholars are of the opinion that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is not a project for one and all. This can be executed by a sitting ruler or someone authorised by him.

Let us first tackle the question whether only rulers are entitled to carry out this project or even masses are

capable of carrying it out.

There is no doubt that the nature of the project is such that on occasions, exercise of power becomes a necessity. But this does not mean that common Muslims cannot participate in the project and that this can be launched only when one assumes reins of government, because this attitude is at variance with clear Traditions in which praise is heaped upon those who speak out in defence of truth and justice before tyrants and despots. Two Traditions are furnished below:

أَفْضَلُ الْجِهَادِ كَلِمَةُ عَدْلٍ عِنْدَ سُلْطَانٍ جَائِرٍ

(ابوداؤد، كتاب الملاحم، باب الامر والنهي)

The most distinguished Jihad is to utter a proposition of justice in front of a ruler who crushes dissent, (Abu Dawood, Kitab al-Malahim)

سَيِّدُ الشَّهَدَاءِ حَمْزَةُ بْنُ عَبْدِ الْمُطَّلِبِ وَرَجُلٌ قَامَ إِلَى إِمَامٍ
جَائِرٍ فَأَمَرَهُ وَنَهَاهُ فَفَقَّطَهُ

(رواه الترمذی والحاكم وقال صحيح الاسناد والترغيب والترهيب جلد ۲ ص ۴)

The chief of martyrs is Hadrat Hamza bin Abdul Muttalib and so is a person who stands before a ruthless ruler and enjoins upon him (what is good) and forbids him (evil) and as a result is put to sword. (Tirmidhi; Al-Targheeb wa al-tarheeb, vol.2, p.4)

Imam Nauwi says:

قال العلماء ولا يختص الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
باصحاب الولايات بل ذلك ثابت لاحاد المسلمين قال امام
الحرمين والدليل عليه اجماع المسلمين فان غير الولاة في
الصدر الاول والعصر الذي يليه كانوا يأمرون الولاة

بالمعروف وينهونهم عن المنكر تقرير المسلمين اياهم
وترك توبيخهم على التشاغل بالامر بالمعروف والنهي عن
المنكر من غير ولاية (شرح مسلم، جلد ١ ص ٥١)

Scholars have maintained that it is not duty of the rulers only to enjoin the good and forbid the evil and that the common people have a role in this project too. According to Imam ul Haramain, the proof for this assertion is the consensus (ijma) of the Muslims because during the first epoch and the time adjacent to it, some people who had no political power used to enjoin the good upon the rulers and to forbid them to do evil and the common Muslims remained silent on their action and did not censure them on the score that without reins of government they had the audacity to enjoin the good upon the rulers and to forbid them to do evil. (Sharh Muslim, vol.1, p.51)

The Qur'an has described the following characteristics of the men of faith, "Were We to bestow authority on them in the land, (they) will establish Prayers, render Zakah, enjoin good, and forbid evil." (22: 41)

This clearly demonstrates that the project of enforcing what is good and preventing what is evil is not the special concern of the rulers alone and that every Muslim has to treat it as his duty too; in whose performance no one can create hurdles. Hazrat Umar Ibn Abdul Azeez has this remark to make on the Qur'anic verse 22:41:

الانها ليست على الوالى وحده ولكنها على الوالى والمولى
عليه (تفسير ابن كثير، جلد ٣ ص ٢٢٦)

Beware! This does not apply to a ruler alone; it applies to both the ruler and the ruled.

(Tafseer Ibn Katheer, vol.3, p.226)

Now, the question whether this project can be executed only after securing the permission of the ruler of the time or the permission is not required at all for the execution of the project can be discussed.

The people who insist upon the ruler's permission for the project may in reality be aiming at organizing the project. They are of the opinion that if everyone is allowed to launch the project, then there would be neither orderliness nor coordination and that there is the fear of chaos setting in sometimes. Even though Imam Ghazali is against this condition, he concedes that the condition has the following advantage:

ربما ينتدب لها من ليس اهلا لها لقصور معرفته او قصور
ديانته فيؤدى ذلك الى وجوه من الخلل

(احياء علوم الدين جلد ٢ ص ٢٨١)

On occasions moral policing (Ihtisab) may be undertaken by an unqualified person, deficient in knowledge, reliability and piety, and this may cause severe disruption. (Ihya, vol.2, p. 281)

Allama Abdul Qadir Audah Shaheed says:

والذين يشترطون اذن الامام يقصدون من هذا الشرط تنظيم
الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر (الشرح المجاني ص ٥٠١)

People seek to organize (the project of) Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar when they insist on the leader's permission as a precondition.

(At tashre, p.501)

The instructions, pertaining to this project, found in the Qur'an and the Hadith are absolutely so general that the scholars dismiss this precondition as unnecessary, and have not supported it. Imam Ghazali says:

هذا الاشتراط فاسد، فان الآيات والَاخبار التي أوردنا ها تدلّ
على ان كل من رأى منكراً فسكت عليه عصي اذ يجب نهيه
ايما راه وكيف ماراه على العموم، فالتخصيص بشرط
التفويض من الامام تحكم لا اصل له

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۷۷-۷۸)

This precondition is null and void because the verses and Traditions quoted (in connection with the subject) are of such a general nature that they substantiate the viewpoint that a man disobeys God when he sees a Munkar and remains unmoved, because it is binding on his part to stop the Munkar wherever and in whatever form he sees it. Therefore, to confine the task of forbidding the evil to the precondition that it should be undertaken only when the leader delegates the authority to a person is without substance and basis. (Ihya, vol.2, p.276-277)

Traditions have already been quoted in which protesting against the torture resorted to by the tyrants has been commended. Quoting such Traditions, Imam Ghazali asks pertinently:

فاذا جاز الحكم على الامام على مراغمته فكيف يحتاج الى
اذن الامام

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۷۷-۷۸)

When it is proper to speak out against the ruler himself, then why should an individual stand in

need of his permission? (ibid.)

He continues further:

استمرار عادات السلف على الحسبة على الولاة قاطع باجماعهم
على الاستغناء عن التفويض بل كل من امر بمعروف فان كان
الوالي راضيا به فذاك و ان كان ساخطا له فسخطه له منكر
يجب الانكار عليه فكيف يحتاج الى اذنه

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۷۷-۷۸)

The fact that the early generations of Muslims have continued to protest against the men at the helm of affairs is a clear proof that there is absolutely no need to secure a posting for ordaining the good and forbidding the evil from the rulers. If a ruler is happy with a person who volunteers to enjoin the good, then the matter ends there. But if the ruler is not happy, then his unhappiness over a good act is per se a Munkar, which definitely attracts censure. Then how can this job still need his nod of approval? (ibid.)

The fact of the matter is that this project is not the prerogative of Muslim rulers nor is it necessarily dependent upon their permission. Instead, it is the duty of every Muslim. Whenever he is in a position to execute this project, he should execute it and he would. Allama S'ad al-deen Taftazani writes:

كان المسلمون في الصدر الاول وبعده يأمرون الولاة
بالمعروف وينهونهم عن المنكر من غير نكير من
احد ولا توقيف على اذن، فعلم انه لا يختص بالولاة بل يجوز
لاحد الرعية بالقول والفعل
(شرح القاصد، جلد ۲ ص ۱۸۰)

During the earliest period (of Islamic history) and

even after that, common citizens used to enjoin upon the rulers what was good and forbade them evil. This act of the common citizens was never subjected to criticism nor was it considered to be an act which could be done only with the ruler's permission. This makes it clear that this duty is not particularly the duty of the rulers and that common citizens are allowed to perform this duty by word of mouth or through action.

(Sharh al- Maqasid, vol.2, p. 180)

Indispensable Conditions

Requisite Qualification:

For the project to become compulsory, man should fulfil the first condition of possessing requisite qualification according to Shariah. No order is binding on an unqualified person who is exempted from responsibilities imposed by Shariah. However, this does not mean that, if a non-adult enjoins the good and forbids the evil, he is doing an improper thing. This only means that if he abstains from doing so, he will not be a sinner. If he enjoins the good and forbids the evil, he definitely deserves reward. Imam Ghazali says about this condition:

انه شرط الوجوب فاما مكان الفعل وجوازه فلا يستدعى الال عقل
حتى ان الصبي المراهق للبلوغ المميز و ان لم يكن مكلفا فله
انكار المنكر وله ان يريق الخمر ويكسر الملاهي و اذا فعل
ذلك نال به ثواباً ولم يكن لاحد منعه من حيث انه ليس
بمكلف فان هذه قرينة وهو من اهلها (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۷۴)

* The issue whether a Muslim, adult or non-adult, is authorised to eliminate Munkar by force in the Islamic State, will be discussed later in this book.

This is just a condition to make the task compulsory. As far as the question of possibility and permissibility is concerned, it requires no other thing than brain power. For example, a child, about to reach adulthood and in possession of discrimination, is permitted to throw wine* away and break the instruments of entertainment, even though Shariah does not lay this duty on him (on account of his age). However, if he does these things, he will be recompensed. No one has the right to dissuade him by pointing out that he does not have the requisite qualification, because the child's action entails proximity to God and the child deserves it.

(Ihya, vol.2 p.274)

Power and authority

The second indispensable condition is the possession of power and authority. If some one fulfils this condition, then it becomes compulsory for him to use his power and authority to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. If he does not fulfil this condition, then it is not compulsory for him to execute the project. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said:

من رأى منكم منكراً فليغيره بيده، فإن لم يستطع فبلسانه، فإن لم يستطع فبقلبه، وذلك أضعف الإيمان (مسلم، كتاب الإيمان، باب بيان كون النهي عن المنكر من الإيمان الخ، ترمذي، أبواب الفتن، باب ما جاء في تغيير المنكر باليد أو باللسان أو بالقلب -)

On seeing a Munkar, any one of you should remove it with his hand. If he does not have that capacity, he may make use of his tongue for the

purpose. If he does not have that capacity too, then he must make use of his heart (as the last resort) for the purpose. And the last resort is reflective of emasculated faith. (Muslim, Kitab al-Iman; Tirmidhi, chapters on Fitna)

From this, it may be learnt that the elimination of Munkar by force becomes imperative only when he has the wherewithal for it. Otherwise his duty is confined to speaking out against the evil. If this alternative is not available to him, then the only responsibility which remains with him is to hate the evil and in his heart of hearts he should consider an evil to be an evil. Imam Abu Bakr Jassas says,

اخبر النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم ان انكار المنكر على هذه
الوجوه الثلاثة على حسب الامكان ودل على انه اذا لم يستطع
تغييره بيده فعليه تغييره بلسانه ثم اذا لم يمكنه ذلك فليس
عليه اكثر من انكاره بقلبه. (احكام القرآن، جلد ۲، ص ۳۶)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has said that the opposition to evil can be carried out in the afore-mentioned three ways and an individual can adopt any one of them in keeping with the possibility open to him. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has made it clear that the critic of evil has to resort to oral protest when it is beyond him to suppress evil manually. If the oral protest is beyond him too, then the responsibility which remains with him is no more than feeling a sense of repulsion in his heart against evil. (Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.2, p.36)

Various Forms of Powerlessness

Now we must take up the question how many forms of powerlessness are possible and what the rules of Shariah are in those varying conditions.

Ijze Hissi / Powerlessness in regard to sensitivity

Absence of power manifests itself first as a constricted sensitivity, according to men of jurisprudence. If a man is physically so weak and helpless as to be incapable of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, then this responsibility will not be imposed on him. Imam Ghazali says:

ولا يخفى ان العاجز ليس عليه حصة الاقلية

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۰)

It is not a secret that the responsibility of moral censure made by the heart is the only responsibility imposed on a helpless person.

(Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.280)

Ijze Ilmi / helplessness based on inadequate knowledge

Another way absence of power is gauged, is through the absence of knowledge. A person uninitiated into the semantics of Maroof and Munkar cannot be burdened with the responsibility of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. Allama Abdul Qadir Audah Shaheed says:

ويلحق بالعجز الحسى العجز العلمى (التشريع الجنائى، ج ۱، ص ۴۹۸)

What is applicable to physical weakness is applicable to ignorance too.

(At Tashree al-Jinai, Vol.1 , p.498)

The scope of Maroof and Munkar is vast. It includes

those religious precepts with which every Muslim is expected to be familiar, and those commands to comprehend which deep knowledge and insight of a very high order are required. To the extent to which a person comprehends Maroof and Munkar he is entitled to order or restrain others. If he goes beyond that extent and preaches, monitors, and restrains others physically, in spite of his good intention to serve religion, his effort may become counter - productive. That is why, scholars have made it clear that with regard to only those things whose aspects of Maroof and Munkar are crystal clear, a man should allow or restrain the public. Men of erudition alone are qualified to discourse upon matters which require highly advanced insight into the applicability of a precedent to a given situation - Imam al-Haramain says:

ان الحكم الشرعى اذا استوى فى ادراكه الخاص والعام ففيه
للعالم وغير العالم الامر بالمعروف والنهى عن المنكر واذا
اختص مدركه بالاجتهاد فليس للعوام فيه امر ونهى بل الامر
فيه موكل الى اهل الاجتهاد (شرح المقاصد، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۱)

A scholar or a non-scholar can render the service of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil on a theological issue known to all and sundry. If the issue is of such a nature that it can be comprehended only through *ijtihad*, then the commoners have no right to enforce it or forbid it. The matter should be submitted to men of *ijtihad* and they will initiate action according to their lights.

(Sharh al-Maqasid, vol. 2, p. 281)

Imam Nauwi has put the same viewpoint in his own words:

انما يا مروينهى من كان عالما بمايامر به وينهى عنه وذلك
 يختلف باختلاف الشئ فان كان من الواجبات الظاهرة
 والمُحرمات المشهورة كالصلوة والصيام والزنا والخمر و
 نحوها فكل المسلمين علماء بها وان كان من دقائق الافعال
 والاقوال ومما يتعلق بالاجتهاد ولم يكن للعوام مدخل فيه
 وللهم انكاره بل ذلك للعلماء (شرح مسلم، جلد ١ ص ٥١)

(The project of) Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is meant for him who knows what he is enjoining and what he is forbidding. When problems vary, the method of enjoining and forbidding will vary too. If the issue pertains to unambiguous duties like prayer and fasting and well-known forbidden things like adultery and wine, then this is something which all Muslims are well-aware of. However, if the issue pertains to some subtle aspect of actions or sayings and it requires ijtiḥad, then common people have no right to interfere in it and to pass strictures on it as this is the domain of experts in knowledge.

(Sharh Muslim, vol.1, p.51)

Imam Ghazali makes it clear:

العامى ينبغي له ان لا يحتسب الا فى الجليات المعلومة

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨١)

A common man should resort to stricture only in those matters which are clear and well-known.

(Ihya, vol.2, p.281)

Fear of harm

Absence of power takes the shape of risk which a man may feel if he were to discharge the duty of enjoining

what is good and forbidding what is evil. The duty gets automatically cancelled when the element of risk appears. Imam Ghazali says:

لا يقف سقوط الوجوب على العجز الحسى بل يلتحق به
ما يخاف عليه مكروها يناله فذلك فى معنى العجز

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲، ص ۲۸۱)

The compulsory nature of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is not cancelled by the helplessness caused by physical weakness alone; it is cancelled by a sense of foreboding too that men may come to some harm. This foreboding comes under the category of helplessness. (Ihya vol.2, p.280)

A Tradionist, Ibn Battaal, says:

والنصيحة لازمة على قدر الطاقة اذا علم الناصح انه يقبل
نصحه ويطاع امره وامن على نفسه المكروه فان خشى اذى
فهو فى سعة

(شرح مسلم للنووى، جلد ۱، ص ۵۳)

Advice and goodwill become necessary and are dependent on strength when the man tendering advice is convinced that it will be accepted and acted upon and in addition he should not have any fear of harm coming to him. If there is such a fear of harm, he has the discretion to advise or not to advise. (Sharh Muslim, vol. 1, p.54)

Possibility of harm

Imam Ghazali has discussed in great detail many aspects of harm in his book, Ihya Uloomuddin. The gist of his discussion is furnished below:

Every man desires four things for himself and for his friends and kith and kin - knowledge, health, affluence and social status and privileges. With regard to these, two possibilities are unpleasant - one, the prospect of their end; two, the prospect of securing any one of them getting blighted. After making such an observation, he says,

فرجع المكروه الى قسمين: احدهما خوف امتناع المنتظر
وهذا لا ينبغي ان يكون مَرخصاً في ترك الامر بالمعروف
والنهي عن المنكر (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٢)

Thus there are two types of the undesirable (Makrooh). One of them is fear of the possibility that what is eagerly awaited may be stopped in its tracks. Because of this, it is not permitted to abandon (the duty of) enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. (Ihya, vol.2, p.282)

For example, a student may not criticise the teacher fearing that it may displease his teacher and he refuse to teach him, or a patient may avoid criticising the doctor fearing that the doctor may refuse to treat him, and as a result the hope that he will recover health may not be fulfilled, or a person may prefer silence to the criticism of his ruler or benefactor fearing that he may not get financial assistance from him. In the same way a man may be looking forward to securing a high position and is therefore obliged to avoid criticism fearing that criticism may jeopardise the position. After giving such examples, the learned Imam says,

هذا كله لا يسقط وجوب الحسبة لان هذه زيادات امتعت

وتسمية امتناع حصول الزيادات ضرراً مجازاً وإنما الضرر
الحقيقي فوات حاصل ولا يستثنى من هذا شئ إلا ما تدعو إليه
الحاجة ويكون في فواته محذور يزيد على محذور السكوت
على المنكر (أحياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٣، ٢٨٢)

All these fears do not take away the compulsory nature of Ihtisab or value judgement, because the expectations related to additional things over and above the essential thing and the expectations may not have been fulfilled. It is a misnomer to describe the failure of the expectation for non-essential things as harm or loss. The real loss is to lose what is in one's hand. This is the rule without an exception. However, one exception may be conceded. There is a pressing need for something whose loss may be more dangerous than the danger of the silence over an act of Munkar. (Ihya, vol.2, p.283-284)

The illustrations for this exceptional case are the same as given above. The Imam says,

Suppose there is a man unfamiliar with the basics of his religion and he is learning about them from a scholar who is the only one available in the neighbourhood. On seeing a Munkar being perpetrated, if this man takes up cudgels against the perpetrator, there is every likelihood of the scholar refusing to teach him and the conditions are such that there is no other tutor for him to learn from. Now on the one hand it is essential to be acquainted with the basics of the religion and on the other it is equally necessary to remove Munkar. In this dilemma, the person concerned may take into consideration the nature of Munkar and the need for knowledge and decide for

himself the line of action open to him. If the nature of Munkar is such that its criticism should be given priority over the learning of the basics of religion, then such a priority should be given. Otherwise the religious learning will be preferred and Munkar would be endured in silence. Or, there is a patient whose disease is such that it cannot brook any delay in treatment and the delay may entail the risk of death and unfortunately the doctor available at the time may be guilty of some Munkar. If the doctor is subjected to criticism for his Munkar, it is definite that he may refuse to treat the patient. In such a circumstance the patient has the right to overlook the doctor's Munkar. Or, take the example of a physically emaciated person who can neither earn his livelihood nor ask alms for survival and whose trust in Allah is not robust. If such a person speaks out against some misconduct of a person who is meeting his expenses and he is sure that the person will withdraw his financial support as a consequence forcing the critic to fall back upon forbidden food or to die. In this circumstance the weak person is permitted to ignore the misconduct. Suppose that a goonda is dogging a person and there is no other alternative to get rid of him than to approach the ruler through a man with clout who unfortunately is involved in a Munkar. For example, the man with clout wears silk and if he is criticised for it, then his good offices will not be available and access to the ruler may be denied. Then the goonda will easily murder that person. In such a circumstance, the person, harassed by the goonda, is permitted not to criticise the man of influence and pay more attention to saving his life. After citing such examples, Imam Ghazali says:

فهذه الامور كلها اذا ظهرت وقويت لم يعد استثنائها ولكن الامر فيها منوط باجتهاد المُحتسب حتى يستفتى فيها قلبه ويزن احد المحذورين بالآخر ويرجع بنظر الدين لالموجب الهوى والطبع فان رجح بموجب الدين سمى سكوته مداراة وان رجح بموجب الهوى سمى سكوته مداهنة وهذا امر باطن لا يطلع عليه الا بنظر دقيق ولكن الناقد بصير فحق على كل متدين فيه ان يراقب قلبه ويعلم ان الله تعالى مطلع على باعته وصارفه انما الدين او الهوى وستجد كل نفس ما عملت من سوء او خير محضرا عند الله ولو فى فلة خاطر اولفته ناظر من غير ظلم وجور فما الله بظلام للعبيد

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۳)

Thus, when all these matters are clear and strong, then they can be treated as exceptions. However, these are left to the discretion and understanding of the would-be critic. He can seek the legal decree from his heart and compare the losses in the two (hypothetical) situations and decide one way or the other from the religious perspective and not under the sway of desire and personal inclination. If he prefers silence from the religious perspective, then it will be 'Madarat' (Protocol courtesy); if he does so, under personal desire, then it will be Madahanat (compromise). This is purely an internal issue and he can judge it only by means of a deep insight. However, the True Investigator (God) knows the whole truth. Therefore, every religious person must consult the heart and realize that

Allah knows well whether his decision to remain silent and turn a blind eye to Munkar was dictated by religion or desire. Whatever man does, good or bad, he will get proper recompense without injustice and cruelty from God. Whether it is a matter of a pinprick in the heart or an act not seen by an onlooker, Allah is never unjust to His slaves. (Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.283)

After this the learned Imam takes up the second category of "Zarar" or harm or loss. He says

اما القسم الثانى وهو فوات الحاصل فهو مكروه ومعتبر
فى جواز السكوت فى الامور الاربعة الالعلم
(احياء علوم الدين جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٣)

The second category is the irretrievable loss of a thing in possession. Everyone does not want such a thing to happen. This is true with regard to the four things already mentioned with the exception of knowledge. (Ihya, vol.2, p.283)

The reason this exception is made of knowledge is, that it cannot be snatched away from anyone. If there is any risk to knowledge, it will be due to one's own mistake or indifference. No other person has the strength to cause harm to one's knowledge. So, with regard to knowledge, the possibility of its termination is out of the question.

Of course, it goes without saying that if one so wishes one can endanger someone's health or can even put someone to death. If such a risk exists in the matter of taking the guilty to task, then that duty is cancelled, but the desirability of that duty remains. Similarly, if there is a danger to one's property, one is permitted not to perform the duty of Ihtisab and to observe silence. Even

in that situation it is desirable that he should sacrifice his world and render service to his religion. In this connection Imam Ghazali spells out a general principle.

ولكل واحد من الضرب والنهب حد في القلة لا يكثر
به كالحبة في المال واللطمة الخفيفة المها في الضرب
وحد في الكثرة يتعين اعتباره ووسط يقع في محل
اشتباه والاجتهاد وعلى المتدين ان يجتهد في ذلك
ويرجع جانب الدين ما يمكن (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٣)

There is a minimum limit in matters pertaining to physical assault or ransacking or plunder, which is not worthy of consideration. For example, in a heap one grain is less or an unintentioned slap which causes negligible pain. There is a limit in which plenty is involved and it is necessary to consider it. And there is a middle stage between these two which creates uncertainty and requires a serious application of the mind. At that stage a religious person cannot but use his mental faculties and in doing so the religious aspect should be given preference as far as possible.

(Ihya, Vol.2, p. 283)

With regard to the status, two things have to be considered. One, if 'Ihtisab' leads to the complete termination of social standing itself, then it is permissible for a person to desist from discharging this duty. For example, the critic may have his face painted black and dragged through the market. But, if there is just the fear of the status being affected, then it is not a matter of special importance. For example, a man owns a car and is in the habit of moving about in a car, and, as a result of

the duty of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar, there is the fear that he may be compelled to give up his car and walk. this punishment is not something which can cancel the duty. In that eventuality, Munkar should be censured. After furnishing these details, Imam Ghazali says:

قد دلت العمومات على تأكد وجوب الحسبة وعظم الخطر
 في السكوت عنها فلا يقابله الا ما عظم في الدين خطره
 والمال والنفس والمرؤة قد ظهر في الشرع خطرها فاما مزاي
 الجاه والحشمة ودرجات التجميل وطلب ثناء الخلق فكل
 ذلك لا خطر له (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۳)

The general nature of the words used in the Qur'an and the Hadith indicates that the compulsory quality of Ihtisab is highly emphasised and its suspension is very risky. Suspension of Ihtisab can be allowed only when the cause for suspension entails a still greater risk from the religious point of view. As far as property, life, and respect in society are concerned, their importance in Shariah is well-defined. With regard to the virtues of pomp and glory, the gradation of ornamentation and the eagerness to secure commendation from the populace, it can be asserted that these things are of little or no value. (Ihya, vol2, p.284)

Blame cannot be counted as Harmful

If a person is subjected to reprimand, unpleasantness and blame-game consequent upon the execution of the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, he should not look upon such a reaction as harmful. So, he

should rise above that reaction and execute that project. The Qur'an has the following to say about people who love and are loved by God:

يُجَاهِدُونَ فِي سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ وَلَا يَخَافُونَ لَوْمَةَ لَائِمٍ (المائدة: ٥٤)

Who will strive hard in the way of Allah and will not fear the reproach of the reproacher. (5:54)

The exegetic remarks of Hafiz Ibne Katheer on this verse are as follows:

اي لا يردهم عما هم فيه من طاعة الله و اقامة الحدود و
قتال اعدائه والامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
لا يردهم عن ذلك راد ولا يصدهم عنه صاد ولا يحيك
فيهم لوم لائم ولا عذل عاذل (تفسير ابن كثير، جلد ٢ ص ٤٠)

That is to say, their life-style is such that they obey Allah, establish the penal laws, wage wars with Allah's enemies, enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil. No one can turn them away and no one can stop them, from this life style. No reproach and no indignation can ever affect it adversely. (Tafseer Ibn Katheer, vol.2, p.70)

Hazrat Ubada Ibn Samit reports:

يا يعنا رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم على ان نقول
بالحق اينما كنا لا نخاف في الله لومة لائم (بخارى، كتاب الاحكام،
باب كيف يبالي الامام الناس - مسلم، كتاب الامارة، باب وجوب طاعة الامراء في غير معصية
وتحريمها في المعصية)

We took an oath of allegiance before the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and swore that we would speak the truth wherever we are

and would not bother about the reproach of the reproacher. (Bukhari, Kitab al- Akham; Muslim, Kitab al- Amarat)

This report is corroborated by another hadith. Hazrat Abu Zarr says:

اوصانى خليلي صلى الله عليه وسلم بخصال من الخير،
اوصانى ان لا اخاف فى الله لومة لائم راوصانى ان اقول
الحق وان كان مرأ (رواه ابن حبان فى صحيحه - الترغيب والترهيب، جلد ٢ ص ١١)

My dearest friend (May Allah bless and greet him) has enjoined a few good things upon me. He has advised me that I should not fear the reproach of the reproacher in the matter pertaining to God and I should speak the truth even if it is unpalatable to the listener.

(Ibn Hibban, Al-Tarqheeb wa al-Tarheeb, vol.4,p.11)

Allama Qurtubi says:

اجمع المسلمون فى ما ذكر ابن عبد البر ان المنكر واجب
تغيره على كل من قدر عليه وانه اذا لم يلحقه بتغيره الا اللوم
الذى لا يتعدى الى الاذى فان ذلك لا ينبغي ان يمنعه من
تغيره (الجامع لاحكام القرآن، جلد ٢ ص ٣٨)

According to the report of Ibne Abdul Bar, there is a consensus among the Muslims that the replacement of Munkar is a duty binding upon every Muslim empowered to do so even under the risk of being blamed for his action against Munkar when that blame does not border upon pain. Such blame need not become an obstacle in the process of replacing Munkar.

(Al Jam'i li Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.4, p.48)

Imam Ghazali says:

ولو تركت الحسبة بلوم لائم او با غتياب فاسق او شتمه او
تعنيفه او سقوط المنزلة عن قلبه او قلب امثاله لم يكن للحسبة
وجوب اصلاً اذ لا تنفك الحسبة عنه (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٢)

If ihtisab can be abandoned fearing the reproach of the reproacher, the scandal-mongering of a disobedient person, abuse, harsh language, self-degradation, loss of respect from the peers, then ihtisab would have never become a duty; ihtisab cannot be set aside because of such fears. (Ihya, Vol. 2, p.284)

The Risk of causing harm to others

So far the possibilities of harm to the activist himself in the campaign for the promotion of the good and the elimination of evil have been discussed. One possibility is that the activist may not face the risk of any loss but his relatives and friends may run the risk of loss. Imam Ghazali says that if the risk involves their lives and properties, then the activist may give up ihtisab because just as remaining mute in the face of Munkar is forbidden, causing pain to a Muslim is equally forbidden. But if there is no risk to life and property, and they may be subjected to verbal abuse, then the nature of Munkar would be put under the scanner and the quantum of pain that is likely to be inflicted would be weighed, then the decision would be taken in the light of the result of this comparison. (Ihya, vol. 2, p. 284)

The decision with regard to the absence of power would be based upon the dominant surmise

This elaborate discussion has made it abundantly clear that the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar ceases to be mandatory when man has no power to launch it, whether this powerlessness is due to physical weakness or to insufficient knowledge, whether the fear is based upon a sense of loss or a sense of futility. But the basic question that arises is-how to determine helplessness and powerlessness. Is the dominant surmise enough or is it necessary to have unquestionable knowledge to determine it? While discussing the issue of the fear of risk, Imam Ghazali has dealt with this basic question too. He says:

ان غلب على الظن انه يصاب لم يجب، وان غلب انه لا يصاب وجب، ومجرد التجويز لا يسقط الوجوب فان ذلك ممكن في كل حاسبة (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨١-٢٨٢)

If the activist has a dominant surmise that his activism will certainly lead to pain, then it is not necessary for him to do ihtisab and if he has the dominant surmise that his activism will pose no danger to him, then ihtisab becomes obligatory. Mere opinion or idea cannot annul an obligatory duty because in every act of ihtisab it is possible to have one opinion or another. (Ihya, vol. 2, p.281-282)

During this discussion he asserts that the obligatory nature of ihtisab will cease to be operative only when the activist has 'knowledge' of resultant harm and Imam Ghazali goes on to explain what he means by 'knowledge'.

اعنى بالعلم الظن الذى يجوز بمثله ترك استعمال الماء

والعدول الى التيمم، فاذا انتهى الى هذا الحد لم يعد ان
يرخص في الترك الحسبة (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٣)

What I mean by 'knowledge' is that dominant surmise which is invoked to justify Tayammum in lieu of ablution with water. When conjecture reaches such a level, then the next step will be to permit the suspension of ihtisab sine die.

(Ihya, vol.2, p.283)

The Way of Strong Resolve

In the foregoing paragraphs all forms of loss and non-loss have been focussed upon and it was brought home that if there was a genuine fear of loss or harm, the task of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar loses its mandatory nature. However, it does not mean that if a person, ignoring every kind of fear and risk, carries out that task, he is guilty of making a mistake. In fact it is not only permissible for him but also expected of him. To abandon that task out of fear that life and property may be lost is mere permission that the Shariah has granted to people of low grade faith. The way of high resolve and supreme honour is for man to sacrifice every thing and not to abstain from establishing God's own religion and from identifying Truth as Truth and Imperfection as Imperfection. This fact is highlighted in a Tradition narrated by Hadrat Umar (Allah be pleased with him) that the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said:

انه تصيب امتي في آخر الزمان من سلطانهم شدا تد لاينجو
منه الا رجل عرف دين الله فجاهد عليه بلسانه ويده وقلبه
فذلك الذي سبقت له السوابق ورجل عرف دين الله

فصدق به رجل عرف دين الله فسكت عليه فان رأى من
يعمل الخير احبه عليه وان رأى من يعمل بباطل ابغضه عليه
فذ لك الذى ينجو على ابطانه كله

(رواه البيهقي - مشكاة المصابيح، كتاب الادب، باب فى الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر)

Verily my followers will be subjected to severe persecution by their tyrannical rulers during the Last Days. Deliverance awaits that man who recognises God's religion and defends it with his tongue and hand and heart. God's mercy and blessings in both worlds will accost him. Next in importance is the person who recognises God's religion and confirms its truth (through his heart and tongue). At a still lower level comes the person who recognises God's religion and remains silent about it. When he sees someone doing a good deed, he loves him for the sake of the good deed; when he sees someone committing a wrong, he dislikes that person for what he has done. So, that person will be delivered too because he hid in his heart love for goodness and dislike for evil.

(Al Baihaqi, Mishkat al- Masabih, Kitab al- Adab)

There is no doubt that it is no child's play to put at stake one's life and property for the noble cause of proclaiming the truth as it requires iron resolve and unflinching courage and infinite sincerity and love for the religion. At the same time, it is equally true to say that the status of men endowed with sincerity and determination, according to God, is most sublime. The exalted Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) says:

الا ليمعنّ رجلا مهابة الناس ان يتكلم بالحق اذا علمه الا ان

افضل الجهاد كلمة حق عند سلطان جائر
 (مسند احمد جلد ۳ ص ۱۹، وروى الترمذى غير قوله الا ان افضل الجهاد ان يخاطب كذاب الفتن باب ما اخبر النبي اصحابه بما هو كائن الى يوم القيمة)

Lo! Fear of people should not restrain a person from speaking the truth when he knows it. Lo! The most meritorious Jihad is to speak the truth to the despot's face. (Musnad Ahmad, vol.3, p.19)

The second part of this Hadith has already been mentioned. What this implies is that if the risk is greater in proclaiming the truth, the reward that a person will deserve will be equally higher. Allama Khattabi explains as follows why expressing the bitter truth before an autocrat is jihad of a very high order.

انما صار ذلك افضل الجهاد، لان من جاهد العدو وكان متردداً بين رجاء وخوف لا يدري هل يغلب او يغلب وصاحب السلطان مقهور في يده فهو اذا قال الحق وامره بالمعروف فقد تعرض للتلف واهدف نفسه للهلاك فصار ذلك من افضل انواع الجهاد من اجل غلبة الخوف
 (معالم السنن جلد ۳ ص ۳۵۰)

There is a justification for declaring this kind of jihad to be superior. One who is waging a battle against a combatant is perplexed between hope and fear. One does not know whether he will be victorious or defeated. Where there is a fear that he may lose his life, there is a hope too that he may come out unscathed. This is not the case with the person who criticizes the king. The critic runs into trouble with the king. When the critic speaks the truth and calls upon the king to be

upright, he courts self-extinction and becomes a target of destruction. Thus, the element of fear becomes clearly dominant, raising this Jihad to a superior position. (Mualim al- Sunan, vol.4, p.350)

This community, to whom this project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil has been definitively given and which is expected to get rid of its own failings, has a splendid record of upholding truth by word of mouth and of indomitable courage. In this record where there are examples of tolerating Munkar and not espousing the cause of Maroof on account of the weakness of faith, there are equally numerous illustrations wherein men of iron resolve and undaunting courage confronted wickedness baring their chest and bore testimony to truth in the shade of unsheathed swords. This has guaranteed the survival of this community. If this community is wholly drained of this spirit of fearlessness and sacrifice for the sake of Truth at any given time in future, it will represent the lowest point of its decline and degradation and the community will forfeit God's mercy, and nothing can rescue it from its annihilation. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has made this point clear:

إِذَا رَأَيْتَ أُمَّتِي تَهَابُ أَنْ تَقُولَ لِلظَّالِمِ يَظَالِمُ فَقَدْ تُودِعَ مِنْهُمْ
(رواه الحاكم وقال صحيح الإسناد - الترغيب والترهيب جلد ۴ ص ۱۱)

When you see that my community is afraid of branding a tyrant as a tyrant, then conclude that it has been left in the lurch to fend for itself, (so that sins may thrive and the community is exposed to divine punishment.)

(Al- Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb, vol.4, p.11)

As a rule, love for life and property becomes the

biggest obstacle in the implementation of the project. To whom is life not dear? Who can remain indifferent to property? The thought that deters a man is as follows: How can I openly declare that evil is evil, particularly when the perpetrator has the reins of government in his hands? How can I dare to speak out against torture and persecution, when his tyrannical rule extends in all directions, and when I can lose my life as a result? If I am not physically liquidated, I may be financially ruined, and in certain respects financial destruction can hit much harder than physical death. However, this kind of fear and perplexity is below the dignity of a Muslim and a proof of his weak faith. Life and the resources of life are in God's hands and not in any man's hands. To fear to speak the truth is to betray one's belief that life and bread are owned by human beings or to demonstrate that one does not have as much trust in God as one ought to have. That is why, Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) ordered that one should rise above the considerations of life and property and enjoin the good and forbid the evil because that is what the faith of a believer demands of him.

يا ايها الناس مروا بالمعروف وانهو عن المنكر قبل ان تدعوا
 الله فلا يستجيب لكم وقبل ان تستغفروه ولا يغفر لكم ان
 الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر لا يدفع رزقا ولا يقرب
 اجالا (رواه الاصمباني (الترغيب والترهيب جلد ۴ ص ۱۰۱-۹)

O mankind! Enjoin the good and forbid the evil before that stage arrives when you seek Allah's help and it is not forthcoming and when you seek His forgiveness and He does not oblige. Verily,

(the duty of) Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar does not keep sustenance at a distance, nor does it bring death near. (Al-Targheeb wa al-Tarheeb, vol.4, p.9-10. Hazrat Ali's lecture on the same topic may be read. Ibn Katheer, vol.2, p.74)

Risk of the emergence of another evil

An activist may have the power to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. Still before launching this project he will have to consider what consequences can be expected. Otherwise there is always this risk that in the process of establishing one virtue, another virtue may be lost, while removing one small evil, a major evil may rear its ugly head. Allama Izzuddin Abdul Malik says that there are certain conditions to be fulfilled before the task of forbidding the evil assumes its mandatory nature. His words are given below:

ان يغلب على ظنه انه ان نهاه لا يلحقه مضرة ولا يزيد
المنهي عنه ايضا في منكراته متعنتا لانكار

(مبارق الازهار شرح مشارق الانوار، جلد ١ ص ٥٠)

The activist who undertakes this duty must be persuaded to believe strongly that if he forbids the evil-doer to commit evil, it will involve no personal risk to him and that his act of forbidding would not provoke the evil-doer to wantonly intensify his pursuit of evil. (Mabariq al- Azhaar, interpretation of Mashariq al- Anwaar, vol.1, p.50)

There can be two unreasonable reactions to the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar. One, the activist involved in the project may face a personal risk. Two, he may be safe but there may be an undesirable

consequence. For example, an innocent and unrelated person may be murdered or the evil-doer may start pursuing evil with a greater vigour, or some such consequence may result. As regards the second reaction, there is a consensus among the scholars that if its occurrence is possible, then the project should not be insisted upon. With regard to the first reaction, a detailed discussion has already been provided. However, it will not be out of place if a special aspect of the first reaction is hinted upon. Allama S'ad al-din Taftazani writes:

منها رأى من شرائط الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر انتفاء
مضرة ومفسدة اكثر من ذلك المنكر او مثله وهذا في حق
الوجوب دون الجواز حتى قالوا يجوز وان ظن انه يقتل
ولا ينيك نكاية بضرب ونحوه لكن يرخص له السكوت
(شرح المقاصد، جلد ۲ ص ۱۸۰)

One of the conditions for Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is that the endeavour to eliminate one Munkar should not lead to the emergence of a still greater Munkar or of its equivalent. This condition, however, pertains to the compulsory nature of the project and not to its permissibility. Scholars have gone to the extent of asserting that if the activist fears that he will be murdered and he will not be able to inflict even a slightest pain, like hitting and beating, upon the evil-doer, even then he should continue his activism. Of course, in such a situation it is permissible for him to maintain silence. (Sharh al- Maqasid, vol.2, p180)

Imam Ghazali's viewpoint is that it is not proper to make such a sweeping claim. There is no gainsaying the

fact that to sacrifice life for the sake of Islam is martyrdom and for a Muslim martyrdom is the greatest wealth. However, a believer has to find out whether he is bringing any benefit to his religion or not by sacrificing his life. Mere sacrifice of life without any gain is an act neither of wisdom nor of merit. He says:

ان يعلم انه يصاب بمكروه ولكن يطل المنكر بفعله كما
يقدر على ان يرمى زجاجة الفاسق بحجر فيكسرها ويريق
الخمير او يضرب العود الذى فى يده ضربة مختطفة فيكسره
فى الحال ويتعطل عليه هذا المنكر ولكن يعلم انه يرجع اليه
فيضرب راسه فهذا ليس بواجب وليس بحرام بل هو
مستحب (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۰)

The moral activist anticipates pain to result in and is confident of eliminating evil. For example, he has enough strength to break a glass full of wine being held in the hand of a disobedient person or shake the glass so much that wine falls to the floor or hit a musical instrument so forcefully as to break it and render it useless and he also knows that as a reaction the disobedient person will pounce upon the activist and will use the instrument to strike his head with. In such a situation moral activism is neither compulsory nor forbidden but only desirable. (Ihya, vol.2, p.280)

Imam Ghazali continues his discussion further. The gist of that discussion is given below:

If the moral activist fears that he may be subjected to beating or he may be killed, even then, facing the risk, he may persist in his activism as it is not only permissible to him but

desirable. However, the condition of utility had to be fulfilled. That is, his activism, undertaken at a great risk, must eliminate some Munkar or the dignity of the perpetrator of Munkar must be lowered, or at least the believers may be rendered strong and safe. When the situation is different, as for example, there is a person holding a goblet of wine in one hand and a sword in the other, and it is quite clear that advising him not to drink at tht juncture will provoke him to kill the advisor and it will not certainly deter him from drinking wine, then, in my opinion, discretion is the better part of valour, because moral activism in such a situation is courting self-destruction without any benefit whatsoever. The ideal situation for a man is to sacrifice himself in order to advance the cause of religion. To expose one's self to death without any compensatory benefit is not justified at all, instead, it ought to be declared illegal. It is preferable to practise moral activism only when he has the wherewithal to eliminate Munkar or some religious advantage is expected thereby. Even this is allowed on condition that the resultant hardship will remain confined to the activist. If the activist knows beforehand that the one guilty of Munkar will harm him and his friend or relative or companion too, then activism will not only be disallowed but also declared illegal. This is because power does not mean that if one Munkar is removed, another takes its place. Going one step farther, it may be asserted that if the activist is aware that the targeted Munkar will be eliminated but as a result another person will perpetrate another Munkar,

then to all intents and purposes it will be more appropriate not to resort to moral activism at all because the main aim is not to stop a particular person from committing a Munkar but to ensure conditions in which every Munkar is absolutely forbidden... It will not be difficult to take appropriate action after assessing the difference in degree between the targeted Munkar and the resultant Munkar. For example, there is a person who proposes to slaughter someone's nanny-goat and eat it. If the moral activist knows beforehand that if he prevents that person from carrying out that plan, this will result in that person killing a human being and eating him, then it goes without saying that moral activism in such a situation will be extremely stupid. In sharp contrast, if Mr X proposes to slaughter a person or amputate a limb of his, and the moral activist knows beforehand that his activism will stop the cannibalism of Mr. X but as a result Mr. X may seize by force the property of the targeted person, then there is some justification for moral activism. In all such cases, the moral activist must apply his mind and arrive at a conclusion. It is not possible to formulate a universal principle or apply a readymade doctrine.

(Ihya uloom al-din, vol.2, p.280)

Imam Ibn Qayyim has given a beautiful analysis of this problem and has taken up its different aspects for a comprehensive discussion. He maintains that the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has made the task of forbidding the evil binding upon the ummah in order to secure Maroof which Allah and His Prophet are pleased with. But in the process of forbidding the evil some other

evil emerges unavoidably and that evil is more accursed and undesirable in the eyes of Allah and His Prophet, then the task of forbidding the evil cannot be permitted. Then he goes on to write:

انكار المنكر اربع درجات: الاولى ان يزول ويخلفه ضده،
 الثانية: ان يقل وان لم يزل بجملته، الثالثة: ان يخلفه ماهو
 مثله، الرابعة: ان يخلفه ماهو شر منه، فالدرجتان الاولتان
 مشروعتان والثالثة موضع اجتهاد والرابعة محرمة

There are four possibilities in the event of forbidding the evil. One, Munkar disappears and Maroof replaces it. Two, Munkar may decline but may not disappear fully. Three, Munkar may disappear fully, yielding place to another Munkar of equal quality. Four, Munkar may disappear fully but a still worse Munkar may substitute it. The first two possibilities are legally acceptable; the third requires an exercise of mental faculties; and the fourth is legally unacceptable.

Imam Ibne Qayyim then goes to furnish more details. He says that if a few disobedient and irreligious people indulge in a game of chess, or some inane pastime, or are found enjoying music, it will not be rational or discreet to mercely disrupt their indulgence. Instead, if their attention is diverted to another task, liked by Allah and His Prophet, like archery, horse-riding, etc., then it will be proper to reprimand them for their preference for inane activities. Otherwise, if they are left without any alternative activity, it is possible they may choose major evil activities which they have not yet chosen, engaged as they are in lesser evils. Similarly, if a person reads

pornography or books with nude pictures and there is a fear that if he is asked to avoid reading such books, and he may start reading books propagating new elements in religion or perverse ideas, then it is better not to disturb his reading habits and leave him to himself because by reading vulgar books he may corrupt his moral sense and by reading books which distort religion and misguide, there is the danger of faith being adversely affected. Shaikhul Islam Imam Ibne Taimiyah narrated an anecdote that one day he and some of his friends passed by a place where some Tartars were found drinking wine. On seeing this, a few friends of the Shaikhul Islam started criticizing the Tartars but he asked them not to do so and explained that Allah forbade wine because it made people indifferent to the remembrance of God and Prayers whereas wine was serving a good purpose in the case of the Tartars because it prevented them from killing people, imprisoning children, and looting property. And so, it was better not to interfere with their drinking and to allow them to do what they were doing.

(I'lam al- Muwaqqi'een, vol.2, p.15-16)

Discussion about non-profitability

It so happens sometimes that as a result of implementing the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, there may not be any harm to the activist and there may be no fear of another evil cropping up; still one may have mental reservations about the effectiveness of launching such a project. Some scholars are of the opinion that even in such a state of doubt Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar do not cease to be necessary and binding. (Al- Tashree Al-jinai, p.498, footnote

no.3) Imam Nauwi says that man's responsibility is merely limited to enjoining the good and forbidding the evil and that it is not his responsibility to worry how others will react to it, whether positively or negatively. Therefore he writes.

قال العلماء ولا يسقط عن المكلف الامر بالمعروف والنهي
عن المنكر لكونه لا يفيد في ظنه بل يجب عليه فعله فان
الذكرى تنفع المؤمنين وقد قدمنا ان الذي عليه الامر والنهي
لا القبول وكما قال الله عز وجل مَا عَلَى الرَّسُولِ إِلَّا الْبَلَاغُ
(شرح مسلم، جلد ١ ص ٥١)

Scholars maintain that the compulsory duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil does not cease to be compulsory for anyone qualified for it on the ground that in his opinion the discharge of such a duty will be of no avail. Instead, the duty continues to be compulsory in spite of his adverse opinion because "exhortation benefits those endowed with faith" (51:55) We have made it clear earlier that enjoining (the good) and forbidding (the evil) are compulsory for man and that it is not compulsory to force another to acquiesce. Allah has said, (5 : 99) the prophet has no other duty than to deliver the message (and it is not the duty of the Prophet to force people to accept the message or to put it into practice.) (Sharh Muslim, vol.1, p.51)

On the face of it, Imam Navavi's statement seems to imply that in spite of the certainty that advice will be ineffective, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar will remain compulsory. Such an opinion is incorrect. The

general opinion of the scholars is in favour of keeping this project compulsory only when there is the certainty of its being effective, even if it does not result in harm or evil reaction. If the activist is convinced that his activism will be profitless and bootless, then the duty of enjoining and forbidding will no longer be compulsory. One of the conditions which make the task of forbidding the evil compulsory, according to Allama Izzuddin Abdul Malik is as follows:

ان يغلب على ظنه ان نهيه مؤثر لاعبث

(مبارق الازهار في شرح مشارق الانوار، جلد ١ ص ٥٠)

The activist must have this dominant surmise that the act of forbidding will be effective and will not be vain.

(Mabariq al- Azhaar fi Sharh Mashariq al- Anwaar, vol.1, p.50)

Imam Ghazali says that the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil will not be compulsory if the activist is not persuaded of its effectiveness but the desirability of the duty will remain. This is because irrespective of the fact that criticism may change or may not change a person's conduct, there will always be some advantage in advice - what religion is will be duly made clear and others will come to know about the shariah. In the words of Imam Ghazali:

ان يعلم انه لا يفيد انكاره لكنه لا يخاف مكرها فلا تجب

عليه الحسبة لعدم فائدتها ولكن تستحب لاطهار شعائر

الاسلام وتذكير الناس بامر الدين (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٠)

If the activist knows that his activism will yield no result and he does not have the fear of harm then activism is not necessary because it has no

utility. Still to make the Islamic features explicit and to remind the people about religious affairs, this activism is desirable.

(Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.280)

Even though in a particular matter, the duty of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar may be ineffective, there is an opportunity to bring into prominence the symbols of religion and to advise people, and so according to Imam Ghazali and scholars of his ilk this duty is desirable. Taking advantage of this argument some scholars declare this duty to be compulsory because making explicit the symbols of religion and the act of advising constitute a very important purpose of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar and when this purpose is being achieved then the attempt to enjoin the good and forbid the evil can never be described as an unprofitable endeavour. In response to this, Allama S'aduddin Taftazani says that there is no doubt that the project elevates the dignity of religion but sometimes it may be detrimental to religion and so it is not correct to say that under all circumstances the project is compulsory. So, while spelling out the conditions which make the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil compulsory, he writes:

منها تجويز التأثير بان لا يعلم علم التاثير قطعاً لئلا يكون عبثاً
واشتغالاً بما لا يعنى، فان قيل يجب وان لم يورث اعزازاً للدين
قلنا ربما تكون اذلاً (شرح المقاصد، جلد ۲ ص ۱۸۰)

One condition that makes the project compulsory is that there should be a possibility of it being effective and the activist involved in it should be absolutely sure that it will never be ineffective so that the endeavour should not languish as a vain

and useless effort. If it is asserted that even if it is ineffective, it is necessary for the sake of the honour of religion, my reply is that sometimes it may lead to the humiliation of religion.

(Sharh al-Maqasid Vol.2, p.80)

A possible utility

Whenever there is a talk about the profitability or otherwise of the project, it is generally assumed that the act of enjoining the good was immediately effective and that the act of forbidding the evil promptly resulted in the evil being given up. However, there is need to look at the whole issue from a new angle. It is this. Whether a Muslim responds positively and promptly to the act of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, it can be said that he comes unconsciously under the influence of this act. It is possible that after sometime this influence may become the cause for the renunciation of evil and for putting Maroof to practice because he is quite aware that it is not an act of piety to give up what is good and to be an evil doer, and in the light of his own faith and belief he knows these things to be wrong. If for some reason he is not amenable to reform it is not his sober decision but merely an emotional reaction. And so it can be hoped that when this emotional reaction subsides in course of time he will mend his manners and his way of life will become blameless. Seen from this angle, a proper assessment of the profitability of the project can be made. Even if its useful impact is not immediately evident, one can feel its comprehensive importance. Imam Muhammad has thought out the whole issue from this angle and its beauty lies in the concession granted fully to the psychology of the

Muslim community. He says:

وفي الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر يسعه الاقدام وان كان
يعلم ان القوم يقتلونونه وانه لايتفرق جمعهم بسبه لان القوم
هناك مسلمون معتقدون لما يامرهم به فلا بد من ان فعله
ينكئ في قلوبهم وان كانوا لا يظهرون ذلك

(شرح السير الكبير، جلد ٣ ص ٣٣٩-٣٤٠)

Possibility exists for a Muslim to take the initiative in regard to the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar even when he knows that people may murder him and their social cohesion will not disintegrate on account of him because his target audience is Muslim and they have faith in the things he is exhorting them to do. Therefore his exhortation will have an impact on their hearts even if they do not reveal it.

(Sharh al-Siar al- Kabeer, vol.3, p.339-340)

When the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is launched among Muslims, reaction is expected in two ways. One, response may be immediate; two, reaction may be delayed. The immediate response is the result of certain special conditions in which the project is implemented. In these conditions, both individuals and groups will be generally far away from righteousness and their inclination towards evil will be well pronounced. There will be no readiness to get rid of Munkar and to embrace Maroof. Instead, they will not be ready sometimes to hear a word against Munkar and in favour of Maroof. In such conditions, there is a possibility of establishing Maroof and eliminating Munkar and there is a formidable risk too of the activist losing his life and to make matters worse no Maroof may

be established and no Munkar may be removed in the bargain. The delayed response emerges only when such conditions come to an end. Then the targeted individuals and groups will have greater chances for second thoughts. This response, generally speaking, will be positive and profitable for a Muslim individual or a group. Even if a perverted Muslim beheads a Muslim preacher, his conscience will remind him that the treatment which is reserved for an enemy has been unscrupulously used against a well-wisher and friendly counsellor. It may not be far fetched to assure that this pinprick of the conscience may oblige him to retrace his steps towards religion. Even if the perverted Muslim has no remorse, it is very much possible that his associates in sin may turn a new leaf as a result of preaching and reform, which exploits their inherent capacity to accept the truth. In the history of Islam at no time and in no region did it happen that the project was launched and still a whole community denied itself the fruits of the sincere effort. And so if at a particular time and in certain conditions, one does not feel the good effects of the effort for reform, one need not despair. The good effects may undeniably emerge in future. If the efforts bear no fruit now, it does not follow that they will bear no fruit in future too. It is always possible that the efforts which appear fruitless now may start bearing fruit after a long time. However, it must be conceded that it is not possible for everyone to persist with the effort of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil at a time when conditions are hostile and the success of the effort is obviously uncertain. When conditions are so hostile that people find it difficult to remain steadfast in the practice of religion, then it is more than enough if they preserve their faith and their religion. To impose the

project on them may not be in the fitness of things. However, if the pick of the community do not go farther than the common people, they are keeping their talents unjustly unutilised.

The significance of the Project even When not immediately effective

The traditions of the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) lend support to this. There are two kinds of Traditions. On the one hand there are Traditions which permit a person to lead a cloistered life and to give up the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil in anarchic conditions. On the other hand there are Traditions which commend the people who are not scared of the anarchic conditions and who facing such conditions, perform their duty of social reform, in the hope that those people who possess the capacity to accept Truth will change their lives for the better, if not today, at least tomorrow, and return to the path of righteousness. Three Traditions are presented below first, which stress that the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is cancelled when its effectiveness is not felt.

(١) ائتمروا بالمعروف وتناهوا عن المنكر حتى اذا رايت
شجاً مطاعاً وهوى متبعاً ودنيا مؤثرة واعجاب كل ذي رأى
برايه فعليك بخاصة نفسك ودع العوام

(ترمذى، كتاب التفسير (سورة المائدة) ابو داود، كتاب الملاحم، باب الامر والنهي)

Let there be mutual exhortation to do good and to avoid evil but when you see miserliness in command, vulgar desires being pampered, this world preferred to the Life Hereafter, every intelligent person self-opinionated (without

reference to Shariah), then worry about your own self and turn your back upon the commoners.

(Tirmidhi, Kitab al- Tafseer)

In some Traditions (Ibn Maja) the following words are found in addition:

ورأيت امرأ لا يبدان لك به

(ابن ماجة، ابواب الفتن، باب الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر)

That is , when conditions are such that you don't have the strength to face them, then you are permitted to avoid enjoining the good and forbidding the evil:

(٢) يوشك ان ياتى زمان يغربل الناس فيه غربلة تبقى حثالة

من الناس قد مرجت عهودهم واماناتهم واختلفوا فكانوا

هكذا وشبك بين اصابعه فقالوا كيف بنا يا رسول الله فقال

تاخذون ماتعرفون وتذرون ماتنكرون وتقبلون على

امر خاصتكم وتذرون امر عامتكم (البوداؤد، كتاب الملاحم، باب الامر والنهي،

ابن ماجة، ابواب الفتن، باب التثبت في الفتنة - مسند احمد جلد ٢ ص ٢٢٠)

A time is fast approaching when men will be passed through the sieve and the flotsam and jetsam of morality will remain. They will not keep their pledges. Misappropriation will be rampant. The good and bad will intermingle. (The Prophet passed the fingers of one hand through the gaps in the fingers of another hand to demonstrate the intermingling making distinction between them difficult.) The companions asked him, "What shall we do at that time?" He replied, "Hold on to what you consider Maroof, and give up what you

consider Munkar. Follow the conduct of the ethically distinguished people and ignore the activities of the commoners." (Abu Dawood, Kitab al-Malahim; Musnad Ahmad, vol.2, p.220)

(٣) عن انس بن مالك قال قيل يا رسول الله متى ندع
الالتزام بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر؟ قال اذا ظهر فيكم
ما ظهر في بني اسرائيل، اذا كانت الفاحشة في كباركم
والملك في صغاركم والعلم في رذالكُم

(مسند احمد جلد ٣ ص ١٨٤، ابن ماجه، ابواب الفتن، باب الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر)

Anas Ibn Malik reports that the Prophet was asked when the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil should be given up. He replied, "When the defects of Bani Israel begin to appear in your midst too. That is, when adultery and obscenity (appear) in your class, political power and governance pass on to the lower class, disobedient and rebellious people equip themselves with knowledge." (Musnad Ahmad, vol.3, p.187; Ibn Maja, chapters on fitna)

These Traditions are semantically clear. However, it should be borne in mind that in the conditions mentioned or conditions similar to them emerging anywhere, it is merely permitted to abandon the project. It is neither compulsory nor desirable to abandon the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. That is why, Allama Abu Bakr Jassas says about the first Tradition,

يعني والله اعلم اذا لم يقبلوا ذلك واتبعوا أهواءهم وازاءهم

فانت في سعة من تركهم (احكام القرآن جلد ٢ ص ٣٨)

That is, when they reject the Truth and prefer to

follow their desires, then it is permissible for you to abandon them. (Ahkam al-Quran Vol.2, p.38)

With regard to the second Tradition, Maulana Muhammad Ashraf Azeemabadi, the Indian interpreter of Abu Dawood, says:

هذا رخصة في ترك الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
اذا اكثر الاشرار وضعف الاخيار

(عون المجود، جلد ۴ ص ۲۱۷، مطبوعه دہلی ۱۳۲۳ھ)

This is a concession granted to abandon the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar when the evil people are numerically strong and good people are weak.

(Aun al- Mabood, vol.4, p.217, pub. Delhi, 1323AH)

After writing down a Tradition similar in meaning to the third Tradition, Allama S'aduddin Taftazani says:

الحديث فلايدل الا على نفى الوجوب عند فوات الشرط
بلزوم المفسدة وانتفاء الفائدة

(شرح المقاصد، جلد ۳ ص ۱۸۰)

The Tradition confirms only this that Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar would not be compulsory when the conditions do not obtain; that is, if the project leads to anarchy and no good is gained. (Sharh Al Maqasid, vol.2, p.180)

When circumstances go haywire to such an extent that it becomes difficult for a Muslim to defend his faith and religion without leading a cloistered life, then he is permitted to cut off his relationship with the society and go into hiding because protecting faith should be given priority over everything. For the protection of faith every thing can be given up and it cannot be given up for anything. Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar cease to

be compulsory at such a time. But those individuals who are preordained to reform nations do not remain content with the discharge of compulsory and obligatory duties. They go beyond and discharge more advanced duties. They do not worry about themselves only, they aspire to save others too. They are permitted to adopt a cloistered and obscure life but they do not accept such a way of life because if they give up the battle overwhelmed by anarchic conditions, then no other person will establish Maroof and no voice will be raised against Munkar. In the period of anarchy, if a man parts company with his society in order to protect his faith, undoubtedly he has justification for it. This will be a demonstration of the fact that his bosom houses love for faith. In the Traditions, however, jihad in Allah's way fetches a far higher place so that falsehood disappears yielding place to Truth. For illustration three Traditions are given below.

من خير معاش الناس رجل ممسك عنان فرسه في سبيل الله
يطير على منته كلما سمع هيلة او فرجة طار عليه يتغى القتل
والموت مظانه او رجل في غنيمة في رأس شعفة من هذه
الشعف او بطن واد من هذه الواودية يقيم الصلوة ويوتى الزكاة
ويعبد ربه حتى ياتيه اليقين ليس من الناس الا في خير

(مسلم، كتاب الامارة، باب فضل الجهاد والرباط، ابن ماجه، ابواب الفتن، باب العزلة)

The ideal picture of life for people is that man is holding the reins of his horse in Allah's way. When people scream or show fear and restlessness on the enemy's arrival, he soars on his horse and seeks death and destruction in their proper locations (i.e., on the battle field). Or there is another ideal picture of a shepherd who

seeks a dwelling-place on a mountain top or in a valley along with a few sheep of his. There he establishes Prayer, pays zakah, and continues to worship his Lord until he breathes his last. He maintains rapport with people only in matters of welfare. (Muslim, Kitab al- Imarat; Ibn Maaja, chapters on Fitna)

A misconception one may form after reading this Tradition is that there is a parity between a fighter in Allah's way and a person who seeks solitude in a mountain cave. It is obvious that this misconception is gross distortion which it is not possible for Allah and His Messenger to make. Another Tradition, though brief, clears the misconception and allots a higher place to jihad and then only the renunciation of the world or living in obscurity for the protection of faith is given the next position.

عن ابى سعيد الخدرى قال قيل يا رسول الله اى الناس افضل؟
فقال رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم: مومن يحاهد فى سبيل
الله بنفسه وماله قالوا ثم من؟ قال: مومن فى شعب من الشعاب
يتقى الله ويدع الناس من شره (بخارى، كتاب الجهاد، باب افضل الناس
مؤمن مجاهد بنفسه وماله فى سبيل الله ورواه مسلم فى كتاب الامارة واليوداؤد والترنمى والنسائى فى
البواب الجهاد وابن ماجه فى البواب الفتن)

Hazrat Abu Sayeed Khudri reports. He said that Allah's Messenger was asked, who among the people is the most distinguished of them all. He replied, "That believer who makes Jihad by means of life and property." He was again asked who would be ranked next. He replied, " That believer who dwells in one of the valleys, fears Allah, and keeps people safe from his mischief."

(Bukhari, Kitab al- Jihad; Muslim, Kitab al- Imarat, Abu Dawood, Tirmidhi, Nasai in chapters on Jihad; Ibn Maaja, chapter on Fitna).

The second Tradition is as follows:

المومن القوى خير واحب الى الله من المومن الضعيف وفي كل خير

(مسلم، كتاب القدر، باب الايمان بالقدر والاذعان له - ابن ماجه، مقدمه، باب في القدر)

A strong believer is better and beloved in the eyes of Allah in comparison with a weak believer, even though there is something good in each.

(Muslim, Kitab al- Qadr; Ibn Maaja, Muqaddama, chapter on Qadr)

Imam Nauwi explains this Tradition in the following words:

المراد بالقوة هنا عزيمة النفس والقريحة في امور الآخرة فيكون صاحب هذا الوصف اكثر اقداً على العدو في الجهاد واسرع خروجاً اليه وذهاباً في طلبه واشد عزيمة في الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر واصبر على الأذى في كل ذلك واحتمال المشاق في ذات الله تعالى والراغب في الصلوة والصوم والاذكار وسائر العبادات وانشط طلباً لها ومحافظة عليها ونحو ذلك واما قوله صلى الله عليه وسلم وفي كلّ خير فمعناه في كلّ من القوى والضعيف خير لاشتراكهما في الايمان مع مايتى به الضعيف من العبادات (شرح مسلم، جلد ٢ ص ٣٣٤)

Strength here refers to determination of the soul and firmness of temperament in the matters pertaining to life hereafter. Whoever has this

virtue in him, he will be more aggressive in Jihad against the enemy, more enthusiastic in seeking and confronting the enemy, more determined in enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, in tolerating the pain that will be inflicted on him while pursuing this project, and in enduring hardship in Allah's way. In the same manner he will be more inclined towards prayers, fasting, remembrance of God, and all other forms of worship. He will perform all these duties with all his heart and soul and protect them zealously, etc. As regards the Prophet's statement that in each there is some good, it means that the strong believer and the weak believer are not without something commendable. After all, faith is a common element in both. The weak believer will perform different forms of worship (even though he may not be able to do more challenging jobs.)

(Sharh Muslim, vol.2, p.337)

The third Tradition of this series is as follows:

المومن الذى يخالط الناس ويصبر على اذاهم اعظم اجرا
من الذى لا يخالطهم ولا يصبر على اذاهم (مسند احمد، جلد ۲ ص ۴۳،

ابن ماجه، ابواب القتن، باب الصبر على البلاء، ترمذی، ابواب صفة القيامة)

That believer who is gregarious and displays fortitude when people hurt him has a much greater reward than the believer who shuns company and who is not patient when others hurt him. (Musnad Ahmad, vol.2 p.43; Ibn Maaj, chapters on Fitna, Tirmidhi, chapters on Qiyamat)

Interpreting this Tradition, Allama Muhammad Ibn Ismail al-Saghaani writes:

فيه افضلية من يخالط الناس مخالطة يامرهم فيها بالمعروف
وينهاهم عن المنكر ويحسن معاملتهم فانه افضل من الذى
يعتزلهم ولا يصبر على المخالطة

(سبل السلام شرح بلوغ المرام، جلد ۲ ص ۲۸۲)

The theme of this Hadith is the special distinction of a person who likes the company of others. He seeks the company in order to enjoin the good upon them and forbid them to do evil and he treats them in a decent manner. He is superior to that person who keeps aloof from others and refuses to put up with the inconvenience that intermingling with others causes.

(Subul al- Salam, Sharh Buloog al- Maraam, vol.2, p.282)

These traditions and their elucidation make it clear that in a society, not willing for self improvement for the time being, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar cannot be compulsory but still this duty has great importance of its own. It is because if the endeavour to enjoin the good and forbid the evil continues in the society, those members who resist immediate reform, may embrace reform at a later date. If this endeavour ceases completely, then the chances for reform will disappear and the entire society may be ruined.

Absolute authority

In the preceding pages a detailed discussion was made to conclude that the project ceases to be compulsory if it becomes certain that no good will come out of the project or if there is a fear that some loss may occur as a result of the project. If these two results are absent, that is, there is neither futility nor fear of harm, Imam Ghazali

describes such a situation as a situation of absolute power. In such a situation a believer has to discharge the duty of *Ihtisab*. Imam Ghazali says:

ان يعلم ان المنكر يزول بقوله وفعله ولا يقدر له على مكروه
فيجب عليه الانكار وهذه هي القدرة المطلقة

(احياء علوم الدين، ج ٢ ص ٢٨٠)

When the moral activist knows that if he speaks out or takes a practical step, some Munkar will be eliminated and in addition no harm will come to him, then forbidding the evil will become a compulsory duty for him. This is known as 'absolute power.'

(Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.280)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi Anil Munkar - Possibility of powerlessness in the Context of the task:

Whether man proposes to enjoin the good and forbid the evil by means of force or oral advice, in both cases there is always the possibility of inhibiting factors; this should not be overlooked. In view of such inhibiting factors, the scheme may have to be abandoned.

Allama Abu Bakr Jassas says:

وهي على منازل: اولها تغييره باليد اذا امكن فان لم يمكن
وكان في نفيه خائفا على نفسه اذا انكره بيده فعليه انكاره
بلسانه فان تعذر ذلك لما وصفنا فعليه انكاره بقلبه

(احكام القرآن، جلد ٢ ص ٣٥)

There are grades for the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. The highest grade is to bring about a change for the better with the help of enforcement by hand provided such

enforcement is possible. But if it is not possible there is a fear of losing one's life in the process of eliminating a Munkar manually, then one's responsibility is reduced to forbidding an evil orally. If one fears the same dangerous consequence in the alternative way too, then one's responsibility is over with the second alternative of feeling a sense of abhorrence at heart on seeing a Munkar. (Ahkam al- Quran, vol.2,p.35)

Qazi Ayaz is more elaborate and detailed in his comment.

ان غلب على ظنه ان تغييره بيده يسبب منكراً اشد من قتله
او قتل غيره بسببه كف يده واقتصر على القول باللسان
والوعظ والتخويف، فان خاف ان يسبب قوله مثل ذلك غير
بقلبه وكان في سعة (شرح مسلم للنووي، جلد ١ ص ٥١)

If a man has a formidable feeling that resorting to the elimination of a Munkar with one's physical force at command will result in the emergence of a still more dangerous Munkar like one's own assassination or the murder of some other person then he has to restrain his own hand. He can speak out, sermonise or predict fearful consequences of a Munkar. But if he fears that even his frank speech will become the cause of another Munkar, then his heart will change that Munkar and he will be allowed to do so.

(Sharh Muslim, Nauwi, vol.1, p.51)

Allama Munavi explains a Hadith on the topic of replacing a Munkar and writes:

فان لم يستطع الانكار بيده بان ظن لحوق ضرره فبلسانه اى

بالقول كاستغاثة او تو بيخ او اغلاظ بشرطه فان لم يستطع
 ذلك لوجود مانع كخوف فتنة او خوف على نفس او عضو
 او مال فبقليه (التيسير شرح الجامع الصغير، جلد ۲ ص ۴۱۸)

If a person does not have the competence to replace a Munkar with his hand, for example, he fears that in the process of replacing a Munkar he may be harmed, then he may orally forbid the evil. For example, he may seek assistance to remove a Munkar or may threaten or use harsh language as per the conditions. Even if this alternative arrangement is not possible on account of some impediment like the fear of some mischief or the danger of losing a limb or property, then the heart may be employed to forbid the evil.

(Al- Taiseer, Sharh Al-Jami al- Sagheer, vol.2, p.418)

How to involve the heart and the soul in this project and when

As stated earlier, the Traditions speak of three alternative methods to check and change Munkar - with the hand, with the tongue, and with the heart. The first two methods have been dealt with in detail. The process of changing the Munkar with the heart implies that a Munkar must be acknowledged as Munkar and should be despised. This alternative is open when it is not possible for a man to make use of the first two alternatives. When it is possible for him to change and eliminate the Munkar with his hand or tongue, then he cannot claim to have his duty discharged by merely recognizing a Munkar as a Munkar at heart. Allama Qurtubi has recorded the consensus of

the Muslims on the authority of Ibn Abdul Bar:

إذا انكر بقلبه فقد أدى ما عليه إذا لم يستطع عليه سوى ذلك
(الجامع لأحكام القرآن، ج ٣ ص ٣٤)

When a person despises Munkar from the bottom of his heart, he has fully discharged his duty provided he does not have the strength for other alternatives in this matter.

(Al Jamili Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.4, p.47)

With regard to the gradation of the methods employed to forbid the evil, as mentioned in the Traditions, Mulla Ali Qari has this to say:

من يغير المراتب مع القدرة كان من العاصين ومن تركها
بلاقدرة أو يرى مفسدة أكثر من المصلحة ويكون منكراً بقلبه
فهو من المؤمنين (اللميعين الشرح للأربعين، ص ١٨٩)

He will be committing a sin who alters the gradation of the alternatives, one, who gives up the project of forbidding evil on account of powerlessness or because of his strong feeling that it will result more in disorder than in improvement and who feels at heart that Munkar is undesirable will be counted among the believers.

(Al Mubeen al- Mueen, p.189)

Ibn Hajar Haitami is still more lucid:

يجب تغيير المنكر بكل طريق أمكنه فلا يكفي الوعظ لمن
أمكنه إزالته بيده ولا كراهة القلب لمن قدر على النهي
باللسان (فتح المبین لشرح الأربعين، ص ٢٢٠)

Removal of Munkar by all means possible is mandatory for man. So, it is not enough if a man

uses advice and sermonising when he can neutralise evil with his hand. Similarly, it is not enough if a man abhors evil in his heart of hearts when he can forbid evil with his tongue.

(Fath al- Mubeen, Sharh Al-Arbaeen, p.220)

A believer may pass through circumstances in which he may not eliminate Munkar practically and he may not be able to speak out against it. Still under all circumstances he should dislike Munkar most. And this will be the lowest grade in the elimination of evil and there will be no further lower grade than this. If any heart does not feel contempt and disgust against evil, it means that the heart is no longer warmed by faith. That is why it is stated in a Hadith:

وليس وراء ذلك من الايمان حبة خردل

(مسلم، كتاب الايمان، باب بيان كون النسي عن المنكر من الايمان الخ)

(If the heart is not involved in despising evil), then the heart is devoid of even an atom of faith.

(Muslim, Kitab al- Iman)

Anyone who hates vice and sin, and this hatred is not nominal but genuine will naturally shun the company of those who wallow in vice and sin. It is not possible for a man nursing intense feelings against the conduct of a person not to display them in the interaction with him. That is why, it becomes necessary to maintain a distance from evil company along with the abhorrence of evil. Allama Abu Bakr Jassas writes:

وسعة السكوت عنهم بعد ان يجانبهم ويظهر هجرانهم

(احكام القرآن، جلد ۲ ص ۳۸)

(If he does not have the power to eliminate evil),

then he should remain far away from the wrongdoers and show his distance in practice. Then there is justification for his reticence.

(Ahkam al-Quran, vol.2, p.38)

Not only this. The requirement of faith is that if a believer does not have the power to eliminate evil, he should not become complacent over his helplessness. Instead, there should be a growing craving in him to eliminate Munkar with his own hands and he should pine for securing enough strength for the purpose. The desire to tolerate Munkar out of frustration should not emerge in his heart. Instead, he should keep a firm resolve alive in his heart that as soon as he secured power to eliminate evil, he would definitely eliminate it. Allama Munaavi says about the elimination of evil through the heart:

يكرهه به ويعزم انه لو قدر فعل (التيسير بشرح الجامع الصغير، جلد ۲ ص ۱۸۴)

A believer would despise Munkar from the core of his being and would resolve that on securing power to eliminate evil, he would eliminate it without second thoughts.

(Al-Taiseer Sharh al Jami al- Sagheer, vol.2, p. 418)

Ibn Hajar Haitami says:

يكره ذلك به ويعزم انه لو قدر عليه بقول او فعل ازاله
(فتح المبین لشرح الاربعین، ص ۲۲۰)

A believer would despise Munkar with all his heart and would resolve that if he had the means to eliminate Munkar with his tongue or in a practical way he would eliminate it completely.

(Fath al- Mubeen, Sharh Al- Arbaeen, p.220)

CHAPTER-XI

TOOLS AND MEANS

Resources to eliminate evil/Gradation of Moral Monitoring

What methods and means should be used to enjoin the good and forbid the evil among the Muslims is a question of paramount importance. That is, in an ideological society subscribing to the doctrines of monotheism, Prophethood, and the life hereafter, what resources are available and what resources cannot be used to implement the project of moral dimensions. Imam Ghazali has addressed this question in a very comprehensive way. He prefers to describe these resources as different grades of moral assessment. Allama Abdul Qadir Audah prefers to describe them as the resources for the eradication of evil. (Al-Tashree Al-Jinai, p.505-509) The approach of Imam Ghazali is given briefly. He maintains that there are eight grades of moral assessment.

Grade 1

The moral activist must be aware that a certain person is guilty of a certain Munkar and for that he should not be too inquisitive and intrude upon that person's privacy. If the matter comes to light, he can take action.

Grade 2

On certain occasions, man does not recognise a Munkar as Munkar and mistakes it for Maroof. On account of this misperception, he perpetrates a Munkar. If he is made to see that what he is doing is unacceptable to Allah and will invite His wrath, then he will certainly give

it up. In such a situation it is enough to bring home to him that his action is improper and he should not continue doing it.

Grade 3

If a perverse person knowingly commits a Munkar and opposes a Maroof, then he should be advised to fear Allah, reminded that he would be taken to task on the Day of Judgement, and the exemplary behaviour of the righteous men of yesteryear should be inspiringly described so that he might draw inspiration from them and give up his fascination for sinful life.

Grade 4

In spite of a loving and charming exhortation and advice, a person may turn a deaf ear and refuse to turn a new leaf, then the activist may display his anger and displeasure and, while doing so, he should take precautions that his language does not become abusive and impolite.

Grade 5

Sermonising, advice, reprimand - if all these are of no avail, then Munkar must be forcibly eliminated. For example, musical instruments may be broken, silken cloth worn by a Muslim male may be torn and thrown. However, this type of reaction is not possible in all cases of Munkar. Force can be used to eliminate cases of Munkar cited and of Munkar of a similar category. Force can not be used in those cases of Munkar which merely pertain to tongue or heart or to the person perpetrating them.

Grade 6

The perpetrator of Munkar may be subjected to intimidation and threat but, in the process, precaution may be taken to ensure that the implementation of threat

should not contravene Shariah. For example, it may be said: keep off Munkar; otherwise I will break your head. But it will not be proper to say: keep off Munkar; otherwise I will loot everything from your house, or, I will kill your child.

Grade 7

The perpetrator of Munkar may be given corporal punishment but no tools should be used. But if the situation necessitates the use of tools, then they can be used to the extent necessary.

Grade 8

When one is not in a position to eliminate Munkar, single-handedly, then one can seek cooperation from others. (Ihya Ulloomal-Deen, vol.2, pp.289-292)

Reform through Advice

The methods adopted to implement the project under discussion can be classified under two topics - Reform through persuasion and Reform by means of coercion. Both methods will be implemented in the same sequence. That is, exhortation, advice, gentle persuasion, and affection will be pressed into service first. If this endeavour fails, then force and coercion will be used to implement reform. Until the ineffectiveness of the first method is made certain, the second method will not be adopted. The holy Qur'an says:

وَأِنْ طَائِفَتَانِ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ اقْتَتَلُوا فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا فَإِنْ
بَغَتْ إِحْدَهُمَا عَلَى الْأُخْرَىٰ فَقَاتِلُوا الَّتِي تَبْغِي حَتَّىٰ تَفِي
إِلَىٰ أَمْرِ اللَّهِ فَإِنْ فَاءَتْ فَأَصْلَحُوا بَيْنَهُمَا بِالْعَدْلِ وَ
أَقْسَطُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُقْسِطِينَ ٥
(الحجرات: ٩)

If two parties of the believers happen to fight make peace between them. But then, if one of them transgresses against the other, fight the one that transgresses until it reverts to Allah's command. And if it does revert, make peace between them with justice, and be equitable for Allah loves the equitable. (49:9)

Muslims are ordered in this verse to bring about a rapprochement between two warring groups of theirs in an equitable manner and if one of the warring groups refuses to cooperate with an equitable arbitration, then war is allowed against it, in defence of the victim. That is to say, instruction is given to aim at the amelioration of the condition first. If it fails to deliver, then fighting is ordered. That is why, if oral advice can be effectively used for reform, then the use of coercion will not be in order. The elucidation offered by a few scholars is given below. Abu Bakr Jassas:

امر الله تعالى بالدعاء الى الحق قبل القتال ثم ان ابت الرجوع
قوتلت
(احكام القرآن، جلد ۳ ص ۴۹۳)

Allah orders that the parties should be persuaded to seek the truth first before killing is ordered. Then only, the party which refuses to return to truth will be opposed militarily.

(Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol.3, p.493)

Zamakshari:

يبتدى بالسهل فان لم ينفع ترقى الى الصعب
(الكشاف عن حقائق التنزيل، جلد ۱ ص ۲۲۴-۲۲۵)

First an easy method will be implemented. If its usefulness is not established, then as the next

step a comparatively more difficult method will be adopted.

(Al-Kashshaf, vol.1, p.224-225)

Ibn al- Arabi Maliki:

ان الله سبحانه امر بالصلح قبل القتال وعين القتال عند البغي
(احكام القرآن، جلد ۲ ص ۲۲۳)

Allah has ordained compromise before resorting to mortal combat and the mortal combat is ordained when rebellion occurs.

(Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.2, p.224)

Abu Abdullah al-Qurtubi:

فالمنكر اذا امكنت ازالته باللسان للنهائي فليفعل وان لم
يمكنه الا بالعقوبة او القتل فليفعل فان زال بدون القتل لم
يجز القتل
(الجامع لاحكام القرآن، جلد ۴ ص ۴۹)

When the moral activist can eradicate Munkar by speaking against it, then he should speak out. When Munkar can be eradicated only through punitive action or capital punishment, then it could be adopted. If without capital punishment and with a lesser punishment, Munkar can be removed, then it is not permissible to adopt capital punishment.

(Al Jami li Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.4, p.49)

Do the people have the right to implement reform by means of force?

The viewpoints given above make it clear that in the implementaton of the project, an attempt to reform will precede the use of force. Every Muslim has this right. In fact the Islamic law has imposed this responsibility on

him that he should spread Maroof and raise his voice against Munkar. However, there is this question whether Shariah has permitted everyman who has power to use force to implement the project or is the use of force the prerogative of a government only? Scholars have discussed this question at length. Their views are briefly presented here. Allama Qurtubi says:

قال العلماء : الامر بالمعروف باليد على الامراء و باللسان
على العلماء وبالقلب على الضعفاء يعنى عوام الناس
(الجامع لاحكام القرآن جلد ۴، ص ۴۹)

Scholars are of the opinion that the duty of enjoining the good can be implemented by force by the government, through oral advice by the scholars, and through disapproval at least by the weak, that is, the people.

(Al Jamili Ahkam al-Qur'an, vol.4, p.49)

It is only a principle that has been enunciated in the opinion of the scholars mentioned by Allama Qurtubi. What it means is that as the government is armed with powers, it becomes its duty to use those powers to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. Likewise, it is the responsibility of those individuals endowed with religious knowledge and capable of discharging the duty of propagation and reform to persuade the people to live up to the ideals of Maroof and to impress upon them how wrong it is to be guilty of Munkar. The others who cannot render even this service in a perfect manner may have to remain content with the love of virtue and should not be pleased with vice. They should dislike it from the bottom of their heart. It is not the intention of the scholars whose

opinion is given above that an individual, not armed with powers, should remain absolutely silent and make no effort to the extent possible to remove the evil on seeing that it is being perpetrated. This is because Islam expects a Muslim to eradicate evil gently and affectionately wherever he sees it and if he does not succeed in this manner, then it expects him to use coercion if he can eradicate evil by force.

Use of force in the eradication of an evil

To eradicate an evil, force can be used in two ways. The target may be an evil object and force can be used against it. For example, wine may be thrown out or the musical instruments may be broken. The other way of using force is to target not the evil object but the evil-doer. For example, a man is about to rape a woman. The potential rapist can be beaten and forced to keep off the crime and if in spite of the corporal punishment he is not restrained from the act, then he can be put to sword.

With regard to the first way of suppressing evil, Imam Ghazzali says:

كسر الملاهي و اوراق الخمر فانه تعاطى ما يعرف كونه حقا

من غير اجتهاد فلم يفتقر الى الامام (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۷۷)

Breaking of the instruments of useless entertainment and the vessels of wine is something which is right and ijtihaad is not needed to establish it as an act of Maroof and so this can be done without the prior permission of the Imam or the ruler. (Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.277)

Qazi Ayaz says:

حق المغيران يغيره بكل وجه امكنه زواله به قولاً كان
او فعلاً فيكسر آلات الباطل ويريق المسكر بنفسه او
يأمر من يفعله وينزع الغصوب ويردها إلى اصحابه
بنفسه او يأمره اذا أمكنه (شرح مسلم للنووي، جلد ١ ص ٥١)

The moral activist has the right to eradicate evil by all possible means, oral or practical. Either he himself will break the instruments of evil and throw wine away or order someone who will execute the job. Similarly he will snatch the usurped item and restore it to the rightful owner or someone else will do so on his orders. All this he can do if it is possible for him.

(Sharh Muslim of Imam Nauwi, vol.1, p.51)

Hafiz Ibn Qayyim says:

لا ضمان في كسر أواني الخمر وشق زقاقة
(الطرق الحكمية في السياسة الشرعية، ص ٢٥٦)

No fine can be levied for the act of breaking vessels and pitchers of wine.

(Al- Turuq al- Al hukmiya, p. 256)

Imam Ghazali and Qazi Ayaz subscribe to the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence and Hafiz Ibn Qayyim subscribes to the school of jurisprudence founded by Imam Ahmad. So the three scholars have spoken as the spokesmen of their respective schools of jurisprudence. However, the followers of the Hanafi School make a distinction between a Muslim's property and a non-Muslim's property. If what is ruined has been owned by a Muslim, no compensation will be paid to him irrespective of the religion of the agent who ruined it because what is

forbidden is deprived of its worth and price in the eyes of a Muslim. As against this, if the object that is broken had belonged to a kafir, then compensation would have to be paid to him irrespective of the consideration that the breaking agent was a Muslim or a non-Muslim because it was a possession prized by the owner. Allama Kasani says:

لا يجب الضمان باتلاف الخمر والخنزير على المسلم سواء
كان المتلف مسلماً او ذمياً لسقوط تقوم الخمر والخنزير في
حق المسلم ولو اتلف مسلم او ذمي على ذمي خمر او خنزير
يضمن عندنا خلافاً للشافعي.

(بدائع الصنائع في ترتيب الشرائع، جلد ٤ ص ١٦٤)

If a Muslim's wine or pork is made unfit for use, no compensation will be paid, whether the spoiling agent is a Muslim or a non-Muslim citizen protected by the government, because there is no price for wine or pork so far as a Muslim is concerned. But if a Muslim or a non-Muslim under the government protection spoils the wine or pork owned by a non-Muslim under the government protection, then he will have to pay due compensation for it, according to Hanafi School of jurisprudence. However, Imam Shafi'i disagrees. (He holds the opinion that no compensation is due even in the second case.)

(Badai al-Sanai fi Tarteeb al- Sharai vol.7, p.167)

Use of force against the evil-doer

Use of force against an evil object has been the central theme of this discussion so far. Now we have to

ascertain the view of the scholars with regard to the use of force against a person who commits a Munkar. Allama Abdul Qadir Audah explains how one should discharge the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil when one sees a person in the very act of perpetrating a Munkar.

إذا شوهدها الجاني وهو يرتكب الجنائية كان لى شخص ان
يمنعه من القوة عن ارتكاب الجريمة وان يستعمل القوة
اللازمة لمنعه سواء كانت الجريمة اعتداء على حقوق
الأفراد كالسرقة او اعتداء على حقوق الجماعة كشرب
الخمرو الزنا، وهذا ما يسمى بحق الدفاع الشرعى العام
(التشريع الجنائى، ص ٨٦)

When a Muslim is seen in the process of committing a crime, then all others have a right to restrain him by force and to use all the force required to stop him in his track, irrespective of the nature of the crime, whether it be a violation of individual rights like stealing or it be a violation of social rights like drinking or adultery. This is exactly what is described as the right of the general defence of the Shariah. (At Tashree al-Jinai, p.86)

Allama Abu Bakr Jassas has discussed this topic in a convincing and detailed manner. Important parts of this discussion with a little variation are given below.

The conditions under which the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is executed can be of two types. One condition may be such as to render eradication of evil an impossible task. Another condition may be conducive to the eradication of evil. In that case the

Shariah ordains that a person who is endowed with power to eradicate evil has ~~perforce~~ to do so with his hands. This can be done in many ways. One of the ways may leave no room for avoiding the sword and sparing the criminal's life. Then in that case the criminal should not be spared. For example, one may notice that a person intends to kill him or someone else or seize his property or rape a woman or some such serious crime and one may also know that if that person is advised or resisted without a weapon, he may pay no heed, then one is left with no other alternative than to kill him. It is because the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) has said, " Any one of you who sees evil has to change it with his hands." Therefore, when the situation is such that without killing the evil-doer, evil cannot be eradicated, then it becomes imperative to kill him.

Imam Muhammad says that one is permitted to kill that person who has usurped someone's property and to restore it to the owner. Similarly, Imam Abu Haneefa maintains that a burglar can be killed, and goes further and says that one can justifiably take the life of a person who wishes to break one's teeth, on condition that one is so cornered as to secure no help from others.

The same statement is applicable to those who extort illegal tax from others. That is, such extortionists have forfeited their lives and to kill them is compulsory for Muslims. Any one is permitted to kill anyone of them when he has the power to do so. There is no prior need to reason with or forewarn such extortionists because they extort money knowing well that it is unlawful to do so and advice will fall on deaf ears and it will be unacceptable to them. There is no need to forewarn them because if the

moral activist threatens and gives notice to the evil-doers about what he will do with them, then they will elude him and it will become wellnigh impossible to eradicate the evil they perpetrate.

The same order applies to all those people who are unwavering in their pursuit of major and heinous crimes and commit them openly. That is, it is compulsory to restrain them to the maximum extent possible and to put an end to their crime by force.

To justify what has been stated above, the following verse from the Qur'an may be cited:

فَقَاتِلُوا الَّذِينَ تَبَغُّوْا حَتَّى تَفِيْءَ اِلَى اَمْرِ اللّٰهِ (المحجرات: ٩)

Fight the one that transgresses until it reverts to Allah's command. (49:9)

There is an order in this verse to take up arms against the party that is defiant towards Allah until it yields to arbitration and it renounces the defiant and evil mindset.

(Ahkam al- Qur'an vol.2, p.37-38)

A Misunderstanding Removed

It is now obvious that in order to eradicate evil, a man can go to the extent of taking someone's life if such a need arose, and he can perform this duty either in self-defence or in defence of others, in favour of an individual or in favour of the society. Now a question arises: it is this. Shariah has recognised man's right and others' right to life and property and honour and under this right he is entitled to resist every attack upon him and upon others. The question is whether there is any difference between this right to defence and the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

The reply is that there is a difference and it is beyond a shadow of doubt. Self-defence and defence of others are activities of a limited range and the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil has vast dimensions. For example, if someone wants to commit a murder and you fight against him. You are actually using the right that the Shariah has granted you to protect the lives of others. This is the defence of a victim and an attempt to eradicate an evil. If you prevent an act of suicide, there is no question of defending someone but it is an act of preventing an evil. In the same way, if someone is bent upon committing a rape, and you prevent him from doing so, then it is definitely an act of protecting a helpless woman and of preventing an evil. But if a man and a woman propose to have sex with mutual consent and you do not allow it to happen, then it is not an act of protecting a woman but merely an act of preventing an evil. (For more details, please see *Al- Tashree al-Jinai*, pp. 511-512) In short, prevention of every act which is against the Shariah is an act of forbidding an evil, whether it involves an element of protection or not.

Conditions For use of force

This discussion has made it abundantly clear that every man has the right to forbid evil by coercive methods but this right is not unconditional. There are certain conditions and it is necessary to be aware of them. They are as follows.

1. When evil is being done

Common people can resort to force to forbid evil only when it is being committed. If there is a likelihood of evil being committed in some place in future, it is not

proper to use force. In the same way, after an evil has reared its ugly head, advice can be given to the evil-doer but coercion cannot be used. Imam Ghazali says:

"There are three stages of the act of sin. One, the stage when the sin has been committed; then, it is the duty of the rulers, and not of common people, to apply the penal law or punishment spelt in the Qur'an. Two, the stage when the evil is present and the person involved in it is present. At this stage, it is compulsory to eradicate the evil provided that its eradication should not lead to the emergence of a similar or still greater evil. Common people have a right to eradicate it at this stage. Three, there is a likelihood of the occurrence of an evil. For example, a man is making preparations to hold a party for wine-drinking but wine has not been brought. There is a possibility that some obstacle may unexpectedly emerge and wine may not be used. At this stage, only advice can be given. The right to use force is denied to the people and the government. The exception to this condition is possible only when the person involved is a habitual law-breaker and he is biding his time and waiting for an opportunity to start drinking as soon as all preparations are completed. In such a situation preventive action can be strictly enforced. (Ihya Uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.284)

Allama Ibn Nujaym, while discussing the issue of penal laws says:

قالوا لكل مسلم اقامته حال مباشرة المعصية واما بعد
 الفراغ منها فليس ذلك لغير الحاكم
 (المحرر ابن شريح كتر المذاق، جلد ٥ ص ٢٢)

Scholars of jurisprudence maintain that a Muslim can take the evil-doer to task when he is committing a Munkar but when a Munkar has already been perpetrated, this right to punish vests with the ruler only. (Al- Bahr al- Rayiq, vol.5, p.42)

The justification for this as given in jurisprudence is this:

لوعززه حال كونه مشغولا بالفاحشة فله ذلك وانه حسن
لان ذلك نهى عن المنكر وكل واحد مأموره وبعد الفراغ
ليس ينهى عن المنكر لان النهى عما مضى لا يتصور
فيمحض تعزيرا وذلك الى الامام
(البحرائق شرح كنز الدقائق، جلد ٥ ص ٢٢)

A moral activist has the right to punish a sinner at a time when he is caught red-handed and this right is proper because it is Nahi anil Munkar which has been ordained for everyone. When the crime has been committed, then forbidding evil becomes irrelevant because what is finished cannot be prevented. Only punishment remains and it will be applied by the ruler. (ibid., vol.5, p.42)

Scholars of jurisprudence have made it clear that the use of force against a criminal after the crime is over is a cognisable offence.

للمحتسب ان يعزر المعززان عزره بعد الفراغ منها
(البحرائق شرح كنز الدقائق، جلد ٥ ص ٢٢)

Government appointed law - enforcing agent has the right to punish that person who takes law into his own hands and punishes a criminal when the crime has already been committed (ibid., vol.5, p.42)

One illustration will make it clear. If a man attacks, then the person attacked or any defender of his kills the attacker, then the Shariah will not prosecute the person attacked or his defender. This is a proof for the theory that forbidding the evil by force is allowed only during the course of the evil act. Let us conjure up another situation. After attacking, the attacker retreats in such a way that it appears he has lost interest in making a second attack. If the attacker is killed in such a situation, then the killer will have to render 'Qisas'. (supplement to Al-Bahr al-Rayiq, p.302) This is to substantiate the claim that when the evil act is completed, application of force is impermissible.

2. Use of force to the extent necessary

Common people can apply force to the unavoidable extent only, during the launch of the project. They are not allowed to use force beyond that extent. How to change evil through hand is governed by a certain etiquette. Imam Ghazali says:

ان يقتصر في طريق التغيير على القدر المحتاج.

In the methodology of eradicating evil, the moral activist has to be content with as much force as he needs.

For example, there is an illegitimate occupant of a piece of land and if he can be dragged out of that place by holding his hand, then it is not proper to drag him out by holding his beard or leg. (Ihya Uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.290)

It is a crime to make excessive use of force. Shariah will take punitive action against it. For example, if someone under the excuse of stopping wine-drinking

breaks somebody's vessel, he will have to pay compensation for it, because it is unwarranted to break a vessel on some pretext or other. However, without breaking the vessel if it is not possible to throw wine away, then the vessel can be broken (ibid., p.291)

In the same way, if a burglar breaks into a house and the house-owner knows that, if he raises an alarm, the burglar will bolt away, and still kills him, then Qisas will be compulsorily collected from him. But if the house-owner knows quite well that the burglar will not take to his heels in spite of an alarm raised by him, then he can kill the burglar. (Supplement to Al-Bahr al- Raiq, p.309)

Imam Ghazali has spelt out the basic postulate in this regard.

ليس الى 'احاد الرعية الا الدفع وهو اعدام المنكر فما زاد على
 قدر الاعدام فهو إما عقوبة على جريمة سابقة اوز جر عن لاحق
 وذلك الى الولاة الى الرعية (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۹۱)

The populace has the right to eradicate evil.
 What is in excess of it will be either a punishment
 for a previous crime or a reprimand for the
 impending violation. That will be the prerogative
 of the government and not of the people.

(Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.291)

3. There should be no threat of violent reaction

Use of force in the project is justifiable only when it actually leads to the eradication of evil and the establishment of Maroof on expected lines and at the same time there is no threat of anarchy. In ordinary circumstances, a little use of force to eradicate evil may not pose a special threat of the breakdown of law and

order machinery, but the use of weapons for this purpose will certainly pose a grave threat. That is why, Imam Ghazali says that the common people have the right to beat the evil-doer when necessity arises but they will be permitted to raise a weapon against him only when it does not lead to anarchy as a consequence. This has been mentioned at the start of the discussion. Imam Ghazali has spelt out eight steps for taking cognisance of evil. With regard to the seventh step, he has the following to say:

الدرجة السابعة مباشرة الضرب باليد والرجل وغير ذلك
 مما ليس فيه شهر سلاح وذلك جائز للأحاد و بشرط
 الضرورة والقتصار على قدر الحاجة فى الدفع، فإذا اندفع
 المنكر فينبغى ان يكف ... فان احتاج الى شهر سلاح و كان
 يقدر على دفع المنكر بشهر السلاح وبالجرح فله ان يتعاطى
 ذلك ما لم تشرفتة (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۹۲-۹۱)

The seventh stage of "Ihtisab" is that the evil-doer can be beaten and kicked or punished in some other way in which no weapon is used. This is allowed for common people, on condition that such a step is taken only when the need arises and that they should be content with as much of punishment as is condign to eradicate evil. When the evil is removed, there should be an end to the punishment. If the moral activist feels the necessity to use a weapon and if he has the power to inflict injury upon the evil-doer and can eradicate evil by doing so, then he is permitted to use a weapon. However, it should be ensured that no anarchy is let loose. (Ihya, vol.2, p.291-292)

Use of force against a group guilty of Munkar

So far the question dealt with was whether a citizen of an Islamic state can use force against an individual who is guilty of Munkar. After that, another question crops up. If a group is committing a Munkar or a powerful individual is doing so against whom no single person can stand up, then can that person collect like-minded people to eradicate evil? This question is at once significant and complicated. Any initiative against evil in such a scenario is fraught with grave consequences even though the possibility of the removal of evil and the establishment of Maroof cannot be ruled out. Imam Ghazali says:

اما جمع الأعوان وشهر الأسلحة نذاك قد يجرّ الى فتنه

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۲۷۷)

عامه فقيه نظر

Collecting helpers and brandishing weapons may be a step towards opening a Pandora's box. Therefore, this issue deserves deep thinking.

(Ihya, vol.2, p.277)

Imam Ghazali's personal view in this matter is that there may be little need for a man to gather people who are ready to help and cooperate with him and to embark upon an armed conflict. However, when the necessity so demands, to eradicate evil, he can do battle with the reinforcement from his friends and helpers. Imam Ghazali talked about eight stages of "Ihtisab" and the eighth and the last stage is as follows: Man may not be in a position to eradicate evil by himself and so he may stand in need of help from comrades who can wield weapons. In such a case, the disobedient person against whom resistance is being mobilised, may sometimes seek support from people of his ilk. This will result in two

groups being arrayed against each other and coming to a clash. About this situation there is a difference of opinion whether the leader's permission is necessary or not. Some people hold the opinion that common people should not go to that extent by themselves because mischief will be afoot, anarchy will spread, and the country will be torn apart. Some other people hold the opinion that the leader's permission is redundant. This opinion seems to be nearer the truth because when common people are allowed to enjoin the good and, in this project, mobility from one stage to another and still another stage is unhindered, then the eighth stage could be reached without let or hindrance and could culminate in violence. This violence may necessitate the seeking of help from others. As it is incumbent that one should carry out the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, one should not be deterred by the daunting factors which are inalienable in this project. Forming rows of fighters is the ultimate step in Allah's way and for the eradication of rebellion against God. When ordinary soldiers are permitted to close ranks and fight against the different groups rejecting faith in order to liquidate them, in the same way it should be permissible for common people to liquidate those who espouse mischief and corruption. In short it may be very rare to reach the final stage of 'Ihtishab' but legal opinion cannot be altered on that ground" (Ihya, vol.2, p.292)

It is difficult to go the whole hog with Imam Ghazali. If the citizens of any state are armed with such powers on a vast scale to fight against each other, as the learned Imam permits, then law and order will not survive. Instead, chaos and confusion will be so rampant that the

government will not be able to exercise control over anything.

Now the question is: To supplant evil if one individual can kill another individual, then why is it that one group is not permitted to take up arms against another group for the same purpose?

To seek an answer for this question, two factors have to be borne in mind.

The first factor is that, as stated earlier, an individual can initiate a murderous attack on another for the implementation of the project only when there is no threat of a grave situation emerging as a result. If there is such a threat, then no permission will be granted for such an initiation and it will be unlawful for the individual to resort to murder. If one ponders over this question in the light of what is stated above; what an individual can do is different from what a group can do. For the sake of forbidding the evil if one individual uses force against another, the scale of resultant tragedy, pain, humiliation and madness will not be so large as it will be if a group enters into an armed conflict with another. To be more precise, the scale of mischief in the matter of individuals will be increased a hundredfold in the matter of groups. Therefore, there is no one-to-one correspondence between individuals and groups.

The second factor is that, even though individuals have been permitted undoubtedly to kill when it becomes necessary to do so, this permission has been granted only during conditions when no other alternative is available. In fact, in ordinary circumstances, when the situation warrants fighting and killing, the matter should be handed over to the government. This is the clear stand taken by

the scholars. In the following, the elucidating remarks of two or three scholars are given.

As a matter of principle, Ibn al-Arabi Maliki opposes the action of an individual who takes up arms to eradicate evil and relents only when the nature of the evil is such as to necessitate the use of weapons and when there is the danger of the emergence of a more serious evil if the weapons are not used. For example, when a person is bent upon killing another, then to protect the intended victim, the aggressor has to be resisted. Apart from such rare and exceptional cases, his verdict for ordinary circumstances is as follows:

فان لم يقدر الا بمقاتلة وسلاح فليتركه وذلك انما هو الى
السلطان لأن شهر السلاح بين الناس قد يكون مخرجا الى
الفتنة وايلا الى الفساد اكثر من الأمر بالمعروف ولنهى عن
المنكر
(احكام القرآن، جلد ۲ ص ۱۲۲)

In order to forbid evil, if a person has no other alternative than to take up arms and fight, then he should spare (that evil-doer) because that is not his duty but the duty of the government. The explanation is that if arms are taken out among the people, that would sometimes trigger anarchic conditions and, as a consequence the chaotic conditions would annihilate the advantages of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

(Akham al- Qur'an, vol.2, p. 122)

Imam al- Haramain says:

يسوغ الاحادالرعية ان يصد مرتكب الكبيرة ان لم يندفع
عنها بقوله مالم ينته العمل الى نصب قتال وشهر سلاح، فان

انتهى الامر الى ذلك ربط الامر بالسلطان

(شرح مسلم للنووي، جلد ١ ص ٥٢)

Every member of the citizenry (of the Islamic state) is entitled to resist and restrain anyone committing a deadly sin, when advice and moral exhortation fall on his deaf ears. This resistance is allowed until it reaches the stage of an armed confrontation. When such a stage is reached, then the matter passes into the hands of the ruler.

(Sharh Muslim of Nauwi, vol.1, p.52)

Allama Jarullah Zamakshari says:

الا نكارالذى بالقتال فالإمام و خلفاء اولي' لأنهم اعلم

بالسياسة ومعهم عدتها (الكشاف عن حقائق التنزيل، جلد ١ ص ٢٢٥)

Forbidding the evil by means of armed conflict is the prerogative of the ruler and his successors (and not of the common people) because they have expertise in politics, and they are well-equipped to tackle the crisis.

(Al- Kashshaf, vol.1, p.225)

Scholars have contested the right of the individuals to take up arms in order to enjoin the good and forbid the evil. When such is the case, how could groups be empowered to use weaponry? Only in rare and unavoidable circumstances, the right to use force to forbid evil is conceded. Similarly, groups may be permitted too in similar circumstances. For example, a group of bandits raids a village. Then it becomes the responsibility of every villager to confront the bandits and to compel them to take to their heels. And, if need be, they are permitted to eliminate the bandits altogether.

In the light of the details, given above, a resistance group can resort to the use of weapons against the perpetrators of Munkar when (1) it is not in a position to hand over the matter to a government, (2) there is no threat of mischief and anarchy and the deterioration of the law and order situation, (3) when there is a fear that, in the event of weapons not being used, a more formidable Munkar may rear its head.

Notwithstanding all this, any such initiative will be treated as something of an exception. In ordinary circumstances no party is allowed to use armed might against any individual or group to espouse the cause of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil.

CHAPTER - XII

MODEL CODE

The project of reforming and training Muslims, enjoining good upon them and forbidding them evil is as significant as it is delicate and sensitive. There are special limits and regulations. Without paying attention to them, the professional execution of the project is well-nigh impossible. After transgressing those limits and overlooking those regulations, there is the possibility that in the obsession to establish Maroof, one may commit Munkar, and in the endeavour to supplant Munkar, Maroof may be supplanted too. Therefore, the contours of the model code of the project are delineated in a somewhat detailed manner.

The Distinction between Amr and Nahi

There is no essential difference between enjoining the good and denying space to Munkar. To uphold the good is to asphyxiate the Munkar, and to eradicate the evil is to make Maroof prevail. But a close study of the terminology used gives one a feeling that there is certainly some difference. The difference can be interpreted by saying that Amr bil Maroof is positive in dimension and Nahi anil Munkar is negative in dimension. For example, under the category of Amr bil Maroof come the following: goodwill towards the Muslims, educating and training them, guiding and piloting them in the religious enterprises, extending love and affection to them, rescuing them when they are in difficulties. Nahi

anil Munkar is an attempt to save Muslims from all those doctrines and deeds which endanger their salvation in this world and the next.*

Amr bil Maroof, necessity and desirability

The question with regard to Amr bil Maroof or to Nahi Anil Munkar is: when does it become compulsory for a Muslim and when is it merely permissible and desirable? Scholars say about Amr bil Maroof that:

الامر بالمعروف تابع للمأمور به، فان كان واجبا فالأمر مر به

واجب، وان كان ندباً فنندب (مبارق الانوار، جلد ٥٠ ص ٥٠)

The compulsory nature of enjoining the good or its non-compulsory nature is dependent upon and related to the nature of the thing that is being enjoined. If the thing is compulsory, the

* It is necessary here to clarify that 'Munkar' and 'sin' are treated as 'synonyms' by some when there is a semantic difference between them. Imam Ghazzali has brought out the difference in a detailed manner. He says, "Munkar" has a more comprehensive connotation. 'M'asiyat' or sin does not have such comprehensive connotation. Every undesirable activity is 'Munkar', whether that activity is carried on by one eligible or not, whereas the term 'sin' or M'asiyat is applicable to that action only which renders its perpetrator a sinner, according to Shariah. Let us take the case of a child drinking wine. The child is certainly not guilty of a sin because no sin of the child is involved in that act but in spite of that the child has committed an act of 'Munkar' and the child has to be prohibited from it. It has to be borne in mind that if a lunatic has sex with a mad woman or some animal, he will be prohibited from such an act. It is not because of the distasteful form of the act and not because of its public exposure but because its occurrence per se is distasteful. And so, even if such an act is done in privacy, it is necessary to prohibit it. In the same manner, no distinction will be made between a minor Munkar and a major Munkar. Adultery is an example of major Munkar; in contrast ogling at a strange woman and conversing with her in privacy will be a minor Munkar. In spite of this difference, both acts will be necessarily prohibited. (Ihya Uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.285)

enjoining of it is also compulsory. If the thing is merely desirable, the enjoining of it is merely desirable too. (Mabarq al- Azhaar vol.I, p.50)

Nahi Anil Munkar

Allama Abu Saud says about Nahi Anil Munkar:

اما النهى عن المنكر فواجب كله فان جميع مانكره الشرع
حرام (ارشاد العقل السليم الى مزايا الكتاب الكريم، جلد ۲ ص ۴۸۹)

As regards Nahi Anil Munkar, the verdict is that forbidding every Munkar is compulsory, because whatever the Shariah has disapproved of is unlawful. (Irshad al- Aql al-Saleem, vol.2, p.489)

This opinion of Allama Abu Saud is not accurate. A more balanced view is to treat Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar alike. Just as there are different grades for Maroof and in keeping with the hierarchy of grades, ordaining the good will reflect the hierarchy and will be described as compulsory or desirable, in the same way Munkar has different grades and on the basis of those grades, a particular act of prohibition will be described as compulsory or desirable. This concept has been summed up by Mulla Ali Qari in these words:

اذا كان المنكر حراماً فانه حينئذ وجب الزجر عنه اذ لو كان
مكروهاً لم يجب بل يندب، وكذا الامر بالمعروف تبع لما
يؤمر به فان وجب فواجب، وان ندب فمندوب
(السيبى المعين لفهم الاربعين، ص ۱۸۹)

If Munkar is haram, then censure is compulsory. If Munkar is undesirable, then censure is not compulsory but desirable. In the same way, the

act of ordaining the good is dependent upon the nature of the good thing that is being ordained. If the thing concerned is compulsory, Amr bil Maroof is compulsory; if it is desirable, then Amr bil Maroof is desirable. (Al-Mubeen al-Mueen, p. 189)

Undesirable - curiosity

Shariah has prohibited private espionage. It is unhealthy to be always on the lookout for catching people on the wrong foot or in a compromising position. The Qur'an says:

وَلَا تَجَسَّسُوا (الجمرات: ۱۲)

Do not spy. (49: 12)

The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) says,

ان الامير اذا ابتغى الريه في الناس افسد هم
(ابوداؤد، كتاب الادب، باب في التحسس)

If doubtful things of the affluent are the subject of scrutiny and curiosity (i.e; if one nurtures ill will against the rich on the basis of conjectures), this will affect them adversely. (Abu Dawood, Kitabul Adab)

Another Tradition:

انك ان اتلعت عورات الناس افسدتهم
(ابوداؤد، كتاب الادب، باب في التحسس)

If you pry into the personal secrets of the people, you will turn them bad. (Abu Dawood, Kitab al- Adab)

The right to reprimand a Munkar exists only when a person indulges in it in public. When Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Masood (May Allah be pleased with him) was informed that winddrops were falling from a particular person's

beard, he remarked:

انا قد نهينا عن التجسس ولكن ان يظهر لنا شيء نأخذ به
(ابوداؤد، كتاب الادب، باب في التجسس)

Spying is forbidden for us but if someone commits (a sin) publicly before us, we will take him to task. (ibid.)

Shariah ordains that if someone has committed a sin, he should not confess it publicly at all places; in this way public discourse will be free from a reference to it, and evil will remain confined to its place and not transgress its limits. That is why, the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) said:

من اصاب من هذه القاذورات شيئاً فليستر بستر الله فانه من
يبد لنا صفحته نقم عليه كتاب الله

(موطاء، امام مالك، كتاب الحدود، باب ما جاء في من اعترف على نفسه بالزنا)

Anyone, with the smear of any one of the unclean acts, should realize that Allah has kept it hidden from other eyes and so he should keep it veiled too. Otherwise, God's law will be applied to him if he makes a public confession of the crime.

(Muatta, Imam Malik, kitab al- Hudood)

It becomes clear that anyone who hides his moral lapse is actually following the instruction given by Shariah; and anyone, who is at pains to expose and highlight it, is guilty of another vice. That is why, scholars have written that it is not proper to ascertain what takes place in rave and private parties of the people in order to implement the project of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil. In the same way it is indiscreet to raid a house or indulge in eavesdropping and watch from

outside (who comes and goes) or collect information about the inmates from the neighbours with the purpose of maligning them. This is because, if a person is actually engaged in any wrong-doing, he is answerable to God. As long as his wrong-doing remains confined to the four walls of his house, no one has a right to take exception to his activity. In this connection, an anecdote involving Hadrat Umar (May Allah be pleased with him) is narrated. Once he peeped into a house and saw the house-owner committing a Munkar and so he took strong exception to it. The house-owner protested, "O Leader of the Faithful! I am indeed guilty of one act of disobedience to God whereas you are guilty of three!" Hadrat Umar asked, "How am I guilty?" He replied, "Allah has ordered us not to spy but you spied. Allah has ordered that one should enter the house through the doorway but you climbed to the roof and peeped in. In the same way, He has commanded that one should not enter anyone's house without taking the permission of the owner and while entering the house the inmates should be greeted. You entered without permission and you did not wish 'Salaam' to me." On hearing this reply, Hadrat Umar spared him and asked him to repent. (Ihya Uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.285)

Even if the signs of Munkar are quite clear, like the sounds of music emanating from the house or the brawl of the drunkards, no one should enter the house, according to Allama Abul Hasan Mawardi, and the censure should be directed from outside. This is because one Munkar is already known and there is the possibility of discovering other vices when one goes inside. It is not advisable to expose hidden vices in one's zeal to forbid the evil. (Al Ahkam al- Sultania, p. 243)

Imam Ghazali disagrees with this standpoint. According to him, in the aforementioned case, one is permitted to enter the house, break the instruments of entertainment, and throw wine away. He adds further that it is not permitted to search a person to see whether he has a bottle of wine or some musical instrument in his pockets, even if that person is known for his non-conformity to religion. But if a person carries a musical instrument or wine bottle covered with a thin cloth and it is prominent in spite of being concealed and he carries it openly through the market, then the duty of forbidding the evil should be discharged. (Ihya, vol.2, p.285)

Imam Ghazali's opinion in this matter seems to be more appropriate. There is no doubt interference in one's private life is indefensible. But, when a certain activity ceases to be private on account of its signs coming into public knowledge, then punitive and corrective action should be initiated. Otherwise the procedure of eradicating evil will become deficient and even if the system of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is in place, many evils will continue to thrive.

If the nature of Munkar concerned is such that it is not possible to neutralise it later, then Allama Mawardi allows the practice of spying, investigation, and immediate action. For example, if a reliable person passes on a piece of information that someone is about to commit adultery or rape, or Mr X was taking Mr Y out of the town with the intention of murdering him, (A!:- Ahkam al-Sultaniya, p. 243) in such a case indifference or lethargy cannot be permitted because adultery, loss of virginity and the murder of an innocent person are involved.

It should be clear by now that a most important

condition to be observed in the matter of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil is to abandon the practice of prying into others' secrets. However, there are unavoidable circumstances when this condition can be set aside. Imam Ghazali says:

وقد امرنا ان نستمر ما ستر الله و نكسر على من أبدى لنا صفيته

We have been asked to keep secret what Allah has kept secret and to invoke punitive law when someone makes a public confession of his crime.

He adds further:

معنى التجسس طلب الأمارات المعرفة فالأماراة المعرفة ان حصلت وأورثت المعرفة جاز العمل بمقتضاها فاما طلب الأماراة المعرفة فلا رخصة فيه أصلا

(احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۸۶-۸۵)

'Tajassus' means a search for the signs that give information. If these signs are effortlessly available and they give information (confirming Munkar), then it is permitted to deliberately search for such signs. (Ihya, vol.2, p.285-286)

These words of Imam Ghazali may constitute the basic postulate on this issue.

Manifest Evils

Only that Munkar which is non-controversial and generally recognised as such can be subjected to 'Ihtisab'. What requires analogical application of the mind cannot justifiably be subjected to moral monitoring and rectifying measures. The conditions regulating Ihtisab are many and one of them is described by Imam Ghazali as follows:

ان يكون كونه منكرا معلوما بغير اجتهاد، فكل ما هو
محل الاجتهاد فلا حسبة فيه (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ۲ ص ۸۶-۲۸۵)

What is Munkar should be known as Munkar without an attempt at 'ijtihād'. There will be no 'ihtisab' on a thing whose identity (as Munkar) requires a comprehensive exercise of the mind

(Ihya, vol.2, p.286)

Whatever Imam Ghazali has exemplified in this regard is summarised as follows:

A Hanafi should not criticise a follower of Imam Shafi'i by saying that he is following Imam Shafi'i. And, a Shafi'i follower does not have the right to censure a Hanafi by saying that he is a follower of Imam Abu Haneefa. However, if a person violates a principle of the school of jurisprudence he follows, then he can be criticized on the ground that he does not conform to the school he professes to follow. This type of criticism is open to all, whether they follow a school of jurisprudence or not. It is not proper for a subscriber to a school to disobey the Imam of that school for the sake of convenience when need arises. In the same way, if a Mujtahid goes against his own ijtiḥād, he becomes vulnerable to criticism because it is expected that he should follow his own ijtiḥād and it is not proper for him to abandon his ijtiḥād in favour of someone else's ijtiḥād.

(Ihya, vol.2, p.286)

About that government official in charge of the department of promoting virtue and prohibiting vice, a question arises: can he compel others to follow his opinion and ijtiḥād? Another question is: Is his status in this matter similar to that of non-official persons who

censure evil-doers or does it differ? Allama Abul Hasan Mawardi says that scholars of the Shafi'i school of jurisprudence have given their opinions which support both views. Some say that the government official concerned can compel others to fall in line with his way of thinking but some others say that in controversial matters the right to ijtihad is open to all and so one cannot compel others to abide by one's own ijtihad.

(Al Ahkam al- Sultaniya p.231-232)

The second opinion seems to be more appropriate and reasonable. In matters of ijtihad, Shariah countenances more than one opinion and anyone can follow any opinion he deems fit but he cannot compel others to follow the opinion of his choice. In these matters if one opinion is imposed upon others, it will shrink the space allowed by Shariah and people will be hard put to unnecessarily. Mulla Ali Qari has made a statement in this regard which is extremely reasonable and closer to the spirit of Shariah. He says:

لا انكار فى المختلف فيه بناء على ان كل مجتهد مصيب
اوالمصيب واحد الا ان المخطى غير متعين لنا مع ان الائم
موضوع عنه وعمن تبعه.

There will be no ihtisab in controversial issues. This is on the basis that a Mujtahid is on the right path or it may be asserted that only one is on the right path but the one who errs is not specifically known to us. Moreover the Mujtahid and his followers have been absolved of sin.

He adds further:

ليس له على الاصح ان يحمل الناس على مذهبه سواء

كان مجتهدا او مقلدا فلم يزل الخلاف بين الصحابة
والتابعين (المبين للمعنى لفهم الاربعين، ص ١٩٠)

A more correct statement is that the Muhtasib has no right to coerce people to toe his line, whether he is a Mujtahid or a follower of some Imam. (Instead, he should allow people to follow a school of jurisprudence of their choice as) there was difference among the companions and among their successors/followers,

(Al Mubeen al-Mueen, p.190)

It is essential to censure bid'ah

Ijtihad relates to the detailed instructions of the Shariah. Basic religious doctrines and the fundamentals of the Law do not leave any room for ijtihaad. If someone challenges the basic beliefs of religion, others cannot dismiss the challenge on the pretext that it relates to ijtihaad. Instead, they should compulsorily censure it. Any similar difference in the matter of basic principles and fundamentals is described as bid'ah by Imam Ghazali. He says on this topic:

البدع كلها ينبغي ان تحسم ابوابها وتنكر على المبتدعين
بدعهم وان اعتقدوا انها الحق (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢، ص ٢٨٧)

All doors of bid'ah should be closed and every innovation sponsored by the innovators should be subjected to censure, even if they are inclined to accept the innovation as true. (Ihya, vol.2, p.287)

Anti-Shariah Writings:

Imam Ibn Qayyim says that it is not permissible to write a book which is anti-Qur'an and anti-Sunnah and to

circulate it among Muslims. The Shariah permits the removal and elimination of such books.

الكتب المتضمنة لمخالفة السنة غير مأذون فيها بل
مأذون في محققها وإتلافها وما على الامة اضرار منها
(الطرق الحكمية في السياسة الشرعية، ص ٢٥٣)

It is not permitted to write anti-Sunnah books. It is permitted instead to destroy them, because nothing is more harmful to the community than this.
(Al-turuq Al-hukmiya, p. 254)

He adds further:

الكتب المشتملة على الكذب والبدعة يجب إتلافها و
إعدامها وهي أولى بذلك من إتلاف آلات اللهود
والمعاز وإتلاف أنية الخمر فإن ضررها أعظم من هذه
(الطرق الحكمية في السياسة الشرعية، ص ٢٥)

Books which advocate non-truth and innovation (bid'ah) should of necessity be done away with. Their destruction is more apt than the destruction of the instruments of entertainment and music and the vessels or wine because they cause the greatest damage. (ibid.)

He adds that no liability is involved in the destruction of such books.

لا ضمان في تحريق الكتب المضلة وإتلافها
(الطرق الحكمية في السياسة الشرعية، ص ٢٥٣)

No compensation is liable to be paid for the burning and gutting of such books. (ibid.)

From the point of view of freedom of thought, so much made a fetish of nowadays, this view of books may

appear to be highly prejudiced. But this view may not appear ill-advised if the interest of the community is borne in mind. The Muslim community is a group united by a single ideology; the project which Islam seeks to implement through it cannot be implemented without unity in its ranks. So Islam does not want that this ideological unity should be jeopardised and the community should fall a prey to mental apostasy and ideological confusion. This is because the community cannot combat hostile forces in knowledge and craftsmanship until it has unassailable trust in its philosophy of life and its ideological foundations are strong. History is witness to the fact that whenever its ideological base began to shake, anti-Islamic philosophies began to assimilate it and in the community, instead of witnesses to Allah and the Prophet, standard-bearers of disbelief and atheism began to make their appearance.

The stubborn attitude towards anti-Qur'an and anti-Sunnah books does not envisage fanatical opposition in the place of rationality and persuasion whenever ideological controversies emerge in the community. It envisages that the community should endeavour to remain steadfastly loyal to its religion and beliefs to the maximum extent possible so that defiance against its principles and doctrines does not rear its ugly head. There is no prohibition of meeting the challenge of ideas with superior ideas. Highly informed and intellectual discourse should be rebutted in the same vein. Imam Ibn Qayyim, whose viewpoint against anti-Qur'an and anti-Sunnah books has already been presented considers intellectual rebuttal not only permissible but also

desirable when occasion demands and even mandatory.

اما كتب ابطال الآراء والمذهب المخالفة لهما فلا بأس بها،
وقد تكون واجبة ومستحبة و مباحة بحسب اقتضاء حال
(الطرق الحكمية في السياسة الشرعية، ص ٢٥٦)

There is no harm in those books which repudiate those religions and schools of thought which are hostile to the Qur'an and Sunnah. They are sometimes necessary, sometimes desirable, and sometimes good in accordance with the circumstances. (Al- turuq Al- Hukmiyah, p.256)

Moral Activism among one's Relatives

It is at once necessary and important to enjoin goodness upon the relatives and forbid them evil but there is a code to be followed. Without taking these regulations into consideration one cannot discharge this duty in a proper manner. How this moral project should be promoted among parents, children and spouses will be discussed here. These relatives only have been selected because there is some tenderness in these relationships not obtainable in other relationships.

Shariah recognises two kinds of progeny - adult and non-adult. The nature of the project that parents have to implement varies from one kind of progeny to another.

Ihtisab of non-adult children

What it means to enjoin Maroof and forbid evil to children is that they should have proper upbringing and they should be helped to lead life in accordance with Islamic teachings on attaining maturity. The traditions lay

great stress on the education and training of children. The Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) says:

لَا يُؤَدَّبُ الرَّجُلُ وَلَدَهُ خَيْرَ مِنْ أَنْ يَتَصَدَّقَ بِصَاعٍ

(ترمذى، ابواب البر والصلة، باب ما جاء فى أدب الولد)

It is better for a parent to teach one item of good manners than to donate a large heap (of dates.)
(Tirmidhi, chapters on virtue).

In another Tradition:

مَا نَحَلَ وَالِدٌ وَلَدًا مِنْ نَحْلٍ أَفْضَلَ مِنْ أَدَبٍ حَسَنٍ

(ترمذى، ابواب البر والصلة، باب ما جاء فى أدب الولد)

There is no better gift than the gift of social etiquette that a parent can give to his child. (ibid.)

The education and training of children should not be looked upon merely as an activity that earns merit. It is actually the responsibility that Shariah places upon the parents. In order to acquit themselves of this responsibility properly, Shariah has given the parents the right to inflict corporal punishment. That is why this is what a Tradition says:

مَرَوْا أَوْلَادَكُمْ بِالصَّلَاةِ وَهُمْ ابْنَاءُ سَبْعِ سِنِينَ وَاضْرِبُوهُمْ

عَلَيْهَا وَهُمْ ابْنَاءُ عَشْرٍ

(ابوداؤد، كتاب الصلاة، باب متى يضرب المرء الغلام بالصلاة)

Ask your children to offer prayer when they are seven years old and when they are ten years old, beat them if they are unmindful and negligent of the Prayer.
(Abu Dawood, Kitab al- Salat)

The Tradition refers to harshness in the matter of indifference to Prayer only but it applies to fasting as

well. (Raddul Mukhtar, vol.3, p.261) It is a compulsory duty for the parents to educate and train their children. Therefore experts in jurisprudence say that the parents can employ coercion to make the children read the Qur'an, secure knowledge of religion and learn Islamic etiquette.

The warden of children is the parent and so it is his responsibility primarily to educate and train them and at the same time a mother has a role to play in this matter too. The mother of Virgin Mary prays as follows:

رَبِّ اِنِّی نَدَرْتُ لَكَ مَا فِی بَطْنِی مُحَرَّرًا قَبْلُ مِنِّی اِنَّكَ
اَنْتَ السَّمِیْعُ الْعَلِیْمُ ۝
(آل عمران: ۳۵)

"O Lord! Behold, unto you do I vow that the child in my womb is to be devoted to Your exclusive service. Accept it, then from me. Surely You alone are All-hearing, All-Knowing." (3:35)

Allama Abu Bakr Jassas comments on this prayer as follows:

یَدُلُّ عَلٰی اَنْ لِلَّامِّ ضَرْبًا مِنَ الْوَلَایَةِ عَلٰی الْوَلَدِ فِی تَاْدِیْهِ وَتَعْلِیْمِهِ
وَامْسَاكِهِ وَتَرْبِیَّتِهِ، لَوْلَا اَنْهَا تَمْلِكُ ذَلِكُمْ لَمَانْذَرْتَهُ فِی وَلَدِهَا
(احكام القرآن، جلد ۲ ص ۱۲)

From this it can be learnt that a mother too has a kind of sponsorship in the matter of educating her child, training and punishing it, exclusively reserving it for a cause, and its cultural upbringing. If a woman does not have such a right, Virgin Mary's mother would not have volunteered to make a votive offering.

(Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.2, p.12)

Just as a father has the right to punish and reprimand

his son, in the same manner a mother possesses the right too. (Radd al- Muhtar, vol.3, p.361)

Ihtisab of adult children:

As long as children remain children, parents have the right to punish them to mend their manners but when they outgrow their childhood, that right is withdrawn from the parents because adult progeny achieves an independent identity like that of a stranger. That is why Ibn Abideen says:

اما الكبير فكا لاجنبى (رد المحتار على الدر المختار، جلد ٣ ص ٣٦١)

The son grown to adulthood is like a stranger.

(ibid.)

The scholars insist that the parents continue to have that right even if the children become adults. In Al- Bahr al- Rayiq (vol.4, p.171) the following is found:

ذكر الاسبيجاني أن للأب أن يؤدب ولده البالغ اذا وقع

منه شيء (المحرر الرائق، جلد ٤ ص ١٧١)

Asbijani has mentioned that parents reserve the right to punish their adult (sons) when they are guilty of some wrong-doing. (Al-Bahr al-Raiq Vol.4, p.171)

Apparently there seems to be a contradiction between the two statements but in reality there is no contradiction. To comprehend the two statements one has to keep in mind the Shariah-determined nature of difference between the non-adult and adult children. It is this that the non-adult children have no obligations and are dependent upon their parents. In contrast, adult sons are independent and have a constant status of their own and are answerable

and responsible for what they say and do. And so, in principle it is just and proper that parents should have a right to take their dependent children to task but when the children become intelligent adults and become independent, the parents forfeit that right. After understanding the principled stand, one has to approach the whole issue from the practical point of view which tells us that every child, on attaining adulthood, does not become capable of bearing all responsibilities. Instead, the child remains, sometimes, in need of further patronage and cooperation for a long period. For example, no father can compel an intelligent and adult son, who has clear-cut ideas on issues, to remain with him under the same roof. But, if the father has mental reservations about the character and habits of his son, then he has the powers to deny him permission to reside in a separate house and he can keep him with himself. (ibid.) Not only this, he has the powers to reprimand his son when occasion demands. That is why, Al-Durr al-Mukhtar says:

(والغلام اذا عقل واستغنى برأيه ليس للأب ضمّه الى نفسه)
 الآذالم يكن مأمون على نفسه فله ضمّه لدفع فتنة أوعار
 وتأديبه اذا وقع منه شيء (الدر المختار شرح تنوير الابصار، جلد ۲ ص ۸۸۳)

When the son attains the power of discrimination and of opinion-formation, and does not need others' opinions, then the father has no right to retain him with him. But if he is not satisfied with (his son's development) and fears some mischief or shame, to escape from such an eventuality, he can retain his son with him. And if the son is guilty of some deviant behaviour, the father has the

right to upbraid him. (Al-Durr al- Mukhtar, vol.2, p.883)

There are circumstances in which the father is entitled to retain his son with him, in spite of the son's adulthood. Ibne Abideen says that in similar circumstances the same right should be extended to the warden who looks after the son in the absence of the son's father, because this is the best service rendered to the rights of the womb and to the elimination of evil, and the Shariah has ordained both.

والظاهران الجد كذلك بل غيره من العصابات كالأخ
والعم فان دفع المنكر واجب على كل من قدر عليه
لاسيما من يلحقه عاره وذلك ايضا من أعظم صلة الرحم
والشرع امر بصلتها وبدفع المنكر ما يمكن
(رد المحتار، جلد ٢ ص ٨٨٣)

Apparently the grandfather is like the father. In addition to the grandfather, there are 'Usbat' like brother and uncle who enjoy the same rights ... This is because the elimination of evil is compulsory to a person who has the power to eliminate it. (It is compulsory) in particular to that person who may be put to disgrace on account of it. In addition, it is a very great service in the cause of protecting family honour. Shariah ordains that family rights should be protected and, to the extent possible, evil should be eliminated. (Radd al- Muhtar, vol.2, p.883)

Just as the parents have the right to take the adult sons to task in certain circumstances, in the same way some responsibilities devolve upon them in some circumstances. One example is given here. On the son's

attainment of adulthood and of the capacity to earn his livelihood, the father is freed from the economic responsibility of the son. However, if the son is not in a position to earn due to the pursuit of religious studies, then it is necessary for the father to bear the son's expenses. (Al-Bahr al-Rayiq, vol.4, p.200)

If saving the children from falling prey to seduction and temptation is a part of the project of forbidding evil, then rendering help to them in their pursuit of studies is a part of the project of enjoining the good. This is like saying that when need arises, parents have to enjoin the good upon the children and forbid them to do evil in spite of the adulthood of the progeny.

Ihtisab of the Parents

For sons and daughters, it is a very delicate job and calls for great precaution to enjoin goodness upon parents and to forbid them evil. If they find their parents forsaking goodness and committing evil on account of their lack of knowledge, then it behoves them to spell out to the parents what the rules of Shariah are and to advise them. Going beyond this and resorting to threats or corporal punishment and murder is absolutely not permissible. The Qur'an says:

وَلَا تَقُلْ لَهُمَا آفٌ وَلَا تَنْهَرْهُمَا وَقُلْ لَهُمَا قَوْلًا كَرِيمًا

(بنی اسرائیل: ۲۳)

Do not say to them even "fie" neither chide them
but speak to them with respect. (17:23)

The parent's rights over children are such that if they kill their children, no 'Qisas' will be demanded from them.

لا يقاد الوالد لولد

(ترمدى، ابواب الديات باب ما جاء فى الرجل يقتل ابنه يقاد ام لا)

In lieu of (the murder) of the children, father will not be killed. (Tirmidhi, Abwab al-Diyath)

In the same way, the son himself cannot extract Qisas from his father. For example, if a father kills his son's mother, his son's right to wreak vengeance or demand life for life stands automatically cancelled.

(Alhidaya, Fath al- Qadeer, vol.8, p.260)

In a battle, if the non-believing parents come within the range of his attack, the believing son should do his utmost to avoid killing them with his own hands but when they attack him, he will have no other alternative but to kill them in self-defence.

(Ahkam al- Qur'an, of Jassas, vol.2, p.336; Al-Bahr al- Rayiq, vo.5, p.78)

Experts in Law have written that if the parents have been sentenced by the Shariah court, their progeny will not execute the sentence.

After furnishing these details, Imam Ghazali says:

فاذا لم يجزله ايذاء ه بعقوبة هى حق على جناية سابقة فلا

يجوز له ايذاء ه بعقوبة هى منع من جناية مستقبلة متوقعة بل

اولى (احياء علوم الدين، جلد ٢ ص ٢٨٠)

When it is not permitted for the son to inflict pain on his father through a punishment which has become compulsory on account of a past crime, then punishing his father for a crime which he is likely to commit in future would be more particularly impermissible. (Ihya, vol.2, p.280)

Quoting 'Fusool al- Alami', Allama Ibn Abideen writes that when a son sees his parents in the process of

committing a Munkar, he may ask them once to desist from doing so. If they heed his advice, it is well and good. But, if the parents show their displeasure, he should remain silent and continue to pray that God may guide them and forgive them their faults. (Radd al Muhtar, vol.3, p.261)

Some scholars say that if a son sees his parents in the act of committing a Munkar, he should remove that Munkar without physically touching them. (Al- Tashree al- Jinai, Vol.1 p.509) For example, they may be drinking wine, they should not be spoken to, but the vessels of wine could be over-turned.

Ihtisab of the wife

How should spouses mutually implement the project of Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar? What limits should the husband observe? And under what conditions should the wife implement the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding the evil? The Qur'an says:

(النساء: ٣٤) الرَّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ

Men are the protectors and maintainers of women. (4:34)

This verse makes it clear that the husband is the head and the wife the subordinate in the family system that Islam establishes. The implications in the concept of the husband as 'Qawwan' do not remain confined to the duty of bearing the economic responsibility of the wife and of monitoring the family maintenance but include the protection of her well-being in religious and worldly matters and the removal of her lapses in the area of good manners and social behaviour with the same gentleness with which a patron reforms the defects of his

subordinates. Allama Ibn Katheer elucidates the term 'Qawwam' as follows:

الرجل قيم على المرأة أى هو رئيسها وكبيرها والحاكم عليها
ومؤدبها اذا اعوجت (تفسير ابن كثير، جلد ١ ص ٣٩١)

Man is the manager of his woman. That is, he is the head, the elder, and the boss. When she grows deviant, he mends her ways.

(Tafseer Ibn Kathir, vol.1, p.491)

Jassas syas:

تضمن قوله الرَّجَالُ قَوَّامُونَ عَلَى النِّسَاءِ قيامهم عليهن
بالتأديب والتدبير والحفظ والصيانة (احكام القرآن، جلد ٢ ص ٢٢٩)

"Men are the protectors and maintainers of women." In this statement of God's are included disciplining of the women, their maintenance, their protection, and their supervision.

(Ahkam al- Qur'an, vol.2, p.229)

Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar is a duty from which others are exonerated if a few voluntarily perform it. However, if some particular person is aware of someone's renunciation of Maroof and perpetration of Munkar and is empowered to enjoin the good and forbid evil, then the project ceases to be Fard-e-Kifaya and becomes Fard-e-Ain for that particular person and he cannot but implement the project.

All are aware that no one can be more acquainted with the merits and defects of the members of the family than the head and no one has more authority and rights to reform them than the head of the family. Keeping these two facts in mind and applying the principle mentioned

above, one can conclude that it is the real and inescapable duty of the head of the family to reform his wife and children in numerous matters which others cannot be acquainted with and which others cannot set right. Imam Nauwi, while discussing the project of enjoining the good and forbidding evil, says:

ثم انه قد يتعين كما اذا كان في موضع ليعلم به الاهو
اولايتمكن من ازالته الاهو وكم يري زوجته اوولده اوغلامه
على منكر او تقصير في المعروف (شرح مسلم جلد ١ ص ٥١)

In certain circumstances, Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar become a personal duty and cannot be delegated to others. One circumstance may be that of a man, so stationed that he alone is aware of a Munkar being committed and he alone is qualified to eradicate it. For example, the head of the family sees his wife or children or slave committing a Munkar or being indifferent in the matter of upholding a Maroof, (it becomes a compulsory duty for him to enjoin the good and forbid evil.) (Sharh Muslim, vol.1, p.51)

If a wife does not grant her husband his rights and impugns his authority, then he reserves the right to make her see reason. The Qur'an says:

وَاللّٰى تَخَافُوْنَ نُشُوْرَهُنَّ فَعِظُوْهُنَّ وَاٰجِرُوْهُنَّ فِى الْمَضَاجِعِ
وَاضْرِبُوْهُنَّ (النساء: ٣٤)

As for women from whom you fear rebellion, admonish them and banish them to beds apart and scourge them (4:34)

The husband can take advantage of the right to

punitive action that the Shariah has granted him over his wife in order to enjoin the good and forbid evil. There are certain conditions which he has to fulfil before he could use this right. He cannot violate those conditions and exercise the right to punish.

(1) The husband has the right to punitive action when his wife refuses to have sex with him without an excuse validated by Shariah or impugns his authority or conducts herself in front of him with a sense of superiority and arrogance. For example, she is abusive and querulous towards him, plucks his beard or tears his clothes, avoids decoration and finery in spite of instruction and resources, gives away household goods defying the husband's will, etc. Or she is guilty of an unethical act like abusing someone, baring the face before unrelated persons or converses with them, or steps out of the house without seeking the husband's permission, etc. (Kanzud daqaiq, vol.5, pp.48-49)

(2) If the wife insists upon and demands subsistence allowance, she is well within her rights and she can insist upon her rights and the husband has no right to punish her on this score. (Al Bahrur Raiq, vol.5, p.49)

(3) If the husband resorts to domestic violence without rhyme or reason, he is liable to be punished. (ibid.)

(4) There are Munkars for which the Shariah has pronounced certain kinds of punishment and they are implemented by the government and not by the citizens. The husband is allowed personal punitive action for those acts of Munkar on which the Shariah has not pronounced any punishment. Allama Kashani says:

إذا ارتكبت معصية سوى النشوز ليس فيه حدّ مقدر فللزواج

ان يؤدبها تعزيرها لان للزوج ان يعزر زوجته كما للمولى ان
يعزر مملوكه (بدائع الصنائع في ترتيب الشرائع، جلد ۲ ص ۳۳۴)

Apart from disobedience, if the wife is guilty of any other sin for which no punishment has been fixed by the Shariah, the husband is permitted to deal sternly with her by way of punishment because the husband has the right to punish his wife in the same manner as the owner has the right to punish his slave. (Badai al-Sanai, vol.2, p.334)

(5) A limit is fixed for the wife's punishment which is described in Hadith as **ضربا غير مبرح** (a hit which is not too hard (Muslim Kitab al- Hajj)). It is not permitted for the husband to go beyond this. Explaining the phrase given in the Hadith, Abdullah Ibn Abbas says that it refers to hitting with a miswak or a similar tool, and in another place stipulates that the hit should not be so hard as to break a bone. Qatada says that the hit should be such as to avoid inflicting a defect on the body. (Jami al- Bayan, vol.5, p.41) If the husband beats his wife severely, he becomes liable to punishment.

ادّعت على زوجها ضربا فاحشا وثبت ذلك عليه عزر
(تنوير الابصار، جلد ۳ ص ۲۶۲)

If the wife lodges a complaint that her husband has subjected her to severe violence and the complaint is proved, then the husband will be punished. (Tanveer al- Absar, vol.3, p.262)

Scholars of the Hanafi school of jurisprudence have written that as a result of corporal punishment if the wife loses her life, the husband will have to pay 'diyat'.

(Hidaya, with Fath al- Qadeer, vol.4, p.217)

(6) If the wife does not recognise her husband's right, the husband can advise and persuade her. If this first step does not succeed, then the Qur'an suggests that he may not share the bed with her. Even if the second step fails to mend her ways, then the husband can resort to punishment. On the very first sign of disobedience on his wife's part, he has no right to take the final step.

(Badai al-Sanai, vol.2, p.334)

(7) Some scholars are of the opinion that punishing the wife can be justified only if it is expected that it will have a salutary effect. If there is no such expectation and if the husband thinks that nothing short of a very severe punishment will bring her to her senses, then he forfeits the right to punish her. In the event of those two alternatives, resorting to punishment will be deemed a disproportionate reaction on the husband's part.

(At Tashree al- Jinai, p.516-517)

The project of enjoining the good and forbidding evil has a vast scale and includes the reform of life in its totality, the reform of the systems of belief and worship, of morals and social and economic matters. Against this background, the right that the Shariah has given to the husband to punish his wife is very limited and with this limited right he can reform his wife in a few exclusive spheres only. Now the question is: When the wife gets so perverse as to inflict pain on her husband and to deny him his rights, and go to the extent of turning a blind eye to Allah's rights and violating the laws of Shariah, what should the husband do? The reply in brief is that he should divorce such a wife. It is because, instead of living in the company of an irreligious wife, it is better to seek separation from her. Therefore, in Al-Bahrur al-Raiq,

there is an excerpt from Ghayat al- Bayan:

يستحب طلاقها اذا كانت سليطة موزية أو تاركة للصلاة
لتقييم حدود الله تعالى (البحر الرائق شرح كنز الدقائق، جلد ٣ ص ٢٣٤)

Divorce is preferable when the wife throws tantrums and hurts, does not offer Prayers, and is indifferent to the Shariah's scheme of punishment. (Al-Bahr al Raiq Vol.3, p.237)

Allama Abideen adds to this:

الظاهر ان ترك الفرائض غير الصلاة كالصلاة
(رد المحتار على الدر المختار، جلد ٢ ص ٥٤٢)

Outwardly in addition to abandoning Prayers, giving up other compulsory duties is no different from abandoning Prayers. (Radd al-Muhtar, Vol.2, p. 572)

Hazrat Abdullah Ibn Masood says that he prefers to meet Allah in a (precarious) state of not having paid Meher to his wife instead of living in the company of a spouse who does not offer Prayers to God. (Radd al-Muhtar, vol.2, p.572) [It may be noted that according to Hanafi scholars, the preferred opinion is that the husband can punish his wife for not offering salat. vide Al-Bahr al- Raiq, vol.5, p.49]

Ihtisab of the husband

A woman is subaltern to her husband. In the words of Imam Ghazali, the status of a woman vis-a-vis her husband is similar to the status of a son in relation to his father. And so, if the husband is inadvertently guilty of a Munkar, his wife will point out what Shariah's order is in the matter; if he is wantonly guilty of a Munkar, she will advise him. She cannot go beyond this and has no right to threaten and assault him physically. (Ihya uloom al-Deen, vol.2, p.280)

CHAPTER-XIII

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The project of enjoining the good and forbidding evil requires volunteers with certain qualifications to implement it in letter and spirit, and with expertise while observing all rules and regulations. If these qualifying factors are not there, it will not be possible to do justice to the project. Some of the required qualifications for the project have been indirectly mentioned in the preceding discourses. A few additional qualifications which are significant are enumerated below.

Salat

A believer's role in the world is to enjoin the good and forbid evil. What Allah and His Messenger have ordered him to enjoin is Maroof and what they have asked him to keep away from is Munkar. These two terms-Maroof and Munkar - encompass the whole gamut of religion. Amr bil Maroof and Nahi anil Munkar are synonymous, in reality, with Iqamate Deen or the establishment of the religion. (The Qur'an, 42:13) Such a huge enterprise can be shouldered only by people whose lives are ethically pure and permeated with self-imposed Maroof. How can a volunteer wallowing in Munkar restrain others from it? How can he exhort others to uphold Maroof when his whole life is a stranger to that concept? No revolution can be effected by a preacher who does not abide by his ideals. It requires men of character, whose actions speak louder than words, and

who set an example to others. Salat (Prayers) brings eligibility to a believer to undertake the project, to enjoin good upon the world and to forbid evil. There is an indication to this effect in Hazrat Luqman's advice:

يَا بُنَيَّ أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْمَعْرُوفِ وَانْهَ عَنِ الْمُنْكَرِ وَأَصْبِرْ
عَلَى مَا أَصَابَكَ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ مِنْ عَزْمِ الْأُمُورِ. (لقمن: ١٤)

Son, establish Prayer, enjoin all that is good and forbid all that is evil, and endure with patience whatever affliction befalls you. Surely this is a thing requiring great resolve." (31:17)

Exegetes have written that Hazrat Luqman's advice to his son to establish Prayer implies that the son should perfect his own personality, turn towards God, and develop within himself the spirit of piety and constant remembrance of God. Another piece of advice to enjoin all that is good and forbid all that is evil implies that the son should invite others towards the religion, and he should try to train and reform them. (vide the Second chapter of this book) These two obligations are distinctive and yet there is a deep bond between them. Though Salat is not a precondition, technically speaking, for the implementation of the project, it is still a fact that salat enables a volunteer to shoulder the burden of the project. One who has nothing to do with Salat will find it difficult to discharge the duty of enjoining the good and forbidding evil.

The fact remains that the sublime attributes and excellent characteristics required for the project under discussion emerge from adherence to Salat. The great project of enjoining all that is good and forbidding all that is evil can be implemented as it ought to be implemented

only by that volunteer who does not lose himself in the world thinking that it is a place for recreation and gay abandon but who thinks that the world is a crucible and who lives with the awareness that Allah will reckon with him for every act of his, with the aspiration of securing victory on the Day of Judgement through every deed of his and through straining every nerve for that victory, with the remembrance of God permeating every fibre of his being, and who withdraws fully and promptly from all those activities which fascinate people indifferent to God and who lives avoiding obscenities and evils totally. The Qur'an maintains that these sublime attributes and excellent characteristics flow from the fountain-head of Salat. Signs of the Islamic ethos emerge from Salat, lofty morals are cultivated through Salat. Man is gifted through Salat with a life free from obscenity and evil, filled with the remembrance of God and imbued with a passion for total submission to Him. This idea is beautifully expressed in the following verse of the Qur'an:

أَقِمِ الصَّلَاةَ إِنَّ الصَّلَاةَ تَنْهَى عَنِ الْفَحْشَاءِ وَالْمُنْكَرِ وَلَذِكْرُ
 اللَّهُ أَكْبَرُ
 (التكوير: ٣٥)

Establish Prayer. Surely Prayer forbids indecency and evil. And Allah's remembrance is of even greater merit. (29:45)

From this verse, it can be learnt what importance Salat holds for that volunteer who has jumped into the arena with the iron resolve to combat indecency and evil and to spread goodness and virtue.

Patience

Hazrat Luqman advised his son to be patient while advising him to promote virtue and prohibit vice. This is

to indicate the truth that the project and patience go together. One lacking in patience is not qualified to take up the project. Imam Razi says:

من يأمر بالمعروف وينهى عن المنكر يؤذى فأمره بالصبر
(مفاتح الغيب) (الغدير الكبير) جلد ٦ ص ٥٤٨

A volunteer bares himself to persecution when he takes up the project of enjoining all that is good and forbidding all that is evil. That is why, Hadrat Luqman ordered his son to be patient (in the face of persecution). (Mafatih al- Ghaib, vol.6, p.578)

This connection between the two is mentioned in chapter 103 of the Qur'an in which mutual counselling to hold on to truth and mutual counselling to be steadfast and patient are kept together. Counselling each other to hold on to truth is to tell each other to be sincere in religious matters. This is the work of enjoining all that is good and forbidding all that is evil among Muslims. Counselling each other to be patient is to exhort each other to put up with all the hardships that are inherent in the process of establishing and spreading Islam. This makes it clear how important patience is for the project.

Imam Ibn Taimiyah's observation enables us to have some idea of the need and significance of patience for the project:

أمر الله الرسل وهم أئمة الأمر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر
بالصبر (الحسبة في الإسلام، ص ٤١)

Allah has ordered the prophets, who are in the vanguard of the project for the promotion of virtue and prohibition of vice, to remain patient.

(Al hisbah fi al- Islam , p.71)

When Allah's Messengers needed patience for the

implementation of the project, how can ordinary people implement it without patience?

The truth is that the job of enjoining all that is good and forbidding all that is evil is a formidable task, squeezing and sucking all the best energies of man, testing his power of endurance at every step, and compelling him to go through fire and water. This job can be performed only by that volunteer who has the strength to bear all difficulties, who has the capacity to cling to his religion in spite of repeated bludgeonings, who has no scruples to speak out the truth before the unsparing despot. The volunteer should be endowed with such a high level of indomitable courage and iron resolve that no power should discourage him from espousing the cause of truth and he should be able to confront unflinchingly the most aggressive and oppressive of despots. In the same manner it is necessary for the volunteer for the project to subdue his base urges and subordinate himself to God's commandments because it goes without saying that one who is incompetent in the matter of self-control is not qualified to reform others. The virtue of patience comprises all these good qualities. The volunteer in possession of patience will be capable of executing the project and executing it incessantly in the most trying of circumstances. One who is without patience can not undertake this project and if he ever musters courage to launch it, he will not have the required steadfastness to persist with it.

Forgiveness and forbearance

The holy Qur'an has mentioned forgiveness, the project of enjoining good and forbearance in a cluster in this verse:

خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وَأْمُرْ بِالْعُرْفِ وَأَعْرِضْ عَنِ الْجَاهِلِينَ ۝ (اعراف: ١٩٩)

(O Prophet!) Show forgiveness, enjoin what is good, and avoid the ignorant. (7:199)

This combination proves how deeply they are related. The exegetes have interpreted خُذِ الْعَفْوَ (Show forgiveness) in three ways: 1) Be forgiving towards the people. 2) Do not raise the bar of character and practice for them and do not insist upon too sublime a character and conduct, but tolerate whatever level of behaviour they are able to reach without much ado and do not put them to severe ordeal. 3) No harshness to be used while making economic demands and accept whatever they are able to pay easily. (Ruh al-M'aani, part 9, p.146-147) It is obvious that all the three things have a bearing on morality.

The Quran mentions a forgiving conduct before referring to what is good. This indicates that the volunteer becomes qualified to sponsor goodness only when he is at a very high level of morality. It is possible to enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil only for that volunteer who is an embodiment of modesty and forbearance, who is ready to forgive others' sins, and who tolerates others' excesses, injustice, sarcasm and hostile remarks. An ill-tempered and morally inferior person is totally ill-equipped for the job.

After instructing the Prophet to be forgiving and to enjoin what is good, the Qur'an asks him to be forbearing. This sequence makes it clear that in spite of executing the project, in the most civilized and ethically excellent manner, if the addressee reacts aggressively, it is better for the volunteer to disengage himself from him, because arguing with a fool will prove that there are two and it is

infra dig for that volunteer whose noble mission is to espouse what is good and eschew what is evil.

The Qur'an is not against reasonable discussion on any issue. But when the other party is not intent upon understanding the point and dismisses every rational proof with insufferable insolence and obstinacy, then the Qur'an instructs that time should not be wasted in preparing a rebuttal. The volunteer should become silent.

However, one should not conclude that "forgiveness" and "forbearance" imply that a deal could be struck with the rebels against God and His Messenger or a relaxation could be effected in compulsory duties from which no individual is exempted or that the strict observance of the rights, binding upon all, could be diluted. Any compromise or indifference in matters of this kind will make the entire system of the Shariah go haywire and every person will become a law unto himself. Forgiveness and forbearance are related to universal morality and human conduct, and not to rights and compulsory duties. While discussing the nature of the rules of forgiveness and enjoining the good, Imam Razi (Allah be kind to him) says:

الحقوق التي تستوفى من الناس وتؤخذ منهم اما ان يجوز
ادخال المساهلة والمسامحة فيها واما ان لا يجوز، اما القسم
الاول فهو المراد بقوله خُذِ الْعَفْوَ وِيدخل فيه ترك التشرد في
كل ما يتعلق بالحقوق المالية ويدخل فيه ايضا التخلق مع
الناس بالخلق الطيب و ترك الغلظة والفضاضة ومن
هذا الباب ان يدعو الخلق الى الدين الحق بالرفق واللفظ
..... واما القسم الثاني وهو الذي لايجوز دخول المساهلة

والمسامحة فيه فالحكم فيه ان يأمر بالمعروف والعرف
والعارفة والمعروفة هو كل أمر عرف انه لا بد من التيان به
وان وجوده خير من عدمه، وذلك لأن في هذا القسم لو
اقتصر على الأخذ بالعمولم يأمر بالعرف ولم يكشف عن
حقيقة الحال لكان ذلك سعيًا في تغيير الدين وابطال الحق
وانه لا يجوز (مفاتيح الغيب) (التفسير الكبير)، جلد ٣ ص ٣٢٤

The rights pertaining to man can be classified under two categories. Either they can be relaxed/ ignored or they can be rigidly enforced. When Allah says, "Show forgiveness", this rule comes under the first category. In this category is included the rule that in financial matters too much strictness should not be used. People should be treated in a cultured manner and contempt and sternness should be avoided..... In the same category comes the rule that the religion of truth should be preached in a tender and affectionate manner..... The second category in which rules cannot be relaxed or ignored applies to the order, 'Enjoin the good.' Urf, 'Arifa and Maroofa are terms applied to any such act which is recognised as something awesome and whose presence is better than its absence. If the attitude of indifference is invoked in the matters of the second category, and there is no enjoining of the good, and the truth of the matter is not revealed, then it will mean that a move is afoot to distort religion and eliminate truth. It is obvious that such a move is not acceptable. (Mafatih al- Ghaib, vol.4, p. 347)

Ibn Jareer Tabari says about "avoiding the ignorant":

ذلك وان كان امراً من الله نبيه به فانه تاديب منه عز ذكره
لخلقه باحتمال من ظلمهم او اعتدى عليهم لبالاعراض عمن
جهل الواجب عليه من حق الله ولبالاصفح عمن كفر بالله
وجهل وحدانيته وهو للمسلمين حرب

(جامع البيان في تفسير القرآن، ج ٩، ص ٩٨)

Even though this is Allah's advice to the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) to avoid (the ignorant), this is actually Allah's teaching about good manners to mankind. He wants us to tolerate that man who practises injustice and oppression towards us. It does not mean that we should be complicit with that man also who prefers to be non-compliant in the matter of upholding God's essential right. It also does not mean that we should be neutral towards that man who does not believe in Allah and Allah's oneness because such a man is at war with the Muslims.

(Jami al- Bayan, part 9, p.98)

Sincerity

The very soul of any activity is sincerity. In the eyes of God, those deeds, regarded by the world as great, carry no significance if they are devoid of the spirit of sincerity. That is why, the volunteer, who implements the project of enjoining the good and forbidding evil, should repeatedly re-examine his motive - whether it has any impurity in it, whether his sincerity has been impaired, whether he aims to get some other thing besides Allah's pleasure.

The project is a yeoman service to religion and a

source of blessings to the participant. A greater source of blessings can not be imagined. The project blesses those volunteers who are embodiments of sincerity and who lose themselves in the pursuit of Allah's pleasure, and who aspire for no other thing than victory on the Day of Judgement. However, there is no gainsaying the fact that preserving unalloyed sincerity in the project work is a formidable task. When a man stands up as a spokesman for truth before huge and milling crowds, when innumerable people read his writings, when he suffers imprisonment for the sake his religion, when he fearlessly throws the gauntlet before the forces of evil, when the reports of his service to religion, of his unflinching steadfastness, and of his sacrifices are circulated far and wide, when the tongues wax eloquent in paying glowing tributes to him, there is a grave danger of the desire for reputation, fame, and public applause emerging within him. After the emergence of such a desire, it might be that the project may become beneficial to the addressee but the volunteer who initiated the project will definitely be deprived of the beneficial result. As a matter of fact, if the volunteer is bereft of sincerity and not motivated by God's pleasure, then his preaching and exhortation will not produce any salutary effect upon others too. Mulla Ali Qari says that the project can yield result and secure God's help only if the person involved in it is endowed with sincerity. This is what he says in his own words:

من اهم شروط الامر بالمعروف والنهي عن المنكر ان يكون
صاحبه مخلصًا في فعله طالبًا اظهار دين الله واعلاء كلمته

وَإِطَاعَةُ أَمْرِهِ فِي بَرِيَّتِهِ دُونَ الرِّيَاءِ وَالسَّمْعَةِ وَالْحَمِيَةِ لِنَفْسِهِ
وَطَبِيعَتِهِ فَإِنَّمَا يَنْصُرُ وَيُزِيلُ بِهِ الْمُنْكَرَ إِذَا كَانَ صَادِقًا وَفِي مَقَامِ
الْإِخْلَاصِ مُوَافِقًا قَالَ اللَّهُ تَعَالَى إِنَّ تَنْصُرُوا اللَّهَ يَنْصُرْكُمْ
وَيُثَبِّتْ أَقْدَامَكُمْ (الْمُسْلِمِينَ الْمَعِينِينَ لِقَامِ الْإِبْرَاهِيمِ، ص ١٩٣-١٩٤)

A very significant stipulation is that the volunteer participating in (the project of) enjoining the good and forbidding evil should discharge his duty in all sincerity. His object should be to make God's religion prevail and God's word dominant, and to make humanity subservient to God's commandments. At the same time he should be free from the desire to hog the limelight, to get name and fame, and to pamper his ego and temperament. If his act is true and if he plants himself on the spot of sincerity, then without doubt he will get help and Munkar would disappear. Allah says, "If you aid Allah, He will come to your aid and will plant your feet firmly."

(47:7) (Al- Mubeen al- Mueen, p.193-194)

The volunteer must never forget that the Messengers of Allah made their advent only for the project that he now espouses and that Prophet Muhammad (May Allah bless and greet him) and His companions were associated with it and so if he does not possess a little semblance of the sincerity which characterised the Prophets and their companions, then he is not qualified to be their heir. If anyone implements the project, outwardly he is executing the prophetic mission, but his work will be devoid of that animating power which distinguished the prophetic mission. After explaining the model code that governs the implementation of the project of enjoining the good and

forbidding evil, Nizamuddin Nishapuri says:

كل ذلك ايماناً و احتساباً لا سمعة ولا رياء ولا لغرض من
الاغراض النفسانية و الجسمانية، وذلك ان هذه الدعوة
منصب النبي وخلفائه الراشدين بعده
(غرائب القرآن و رغائب الفرقان (عليه السلام) جلد ۳ ص ۳۲-۳۱)

All this should be done powered by faith and motivated with a desire for Thawab, and not approbation, reputation, and for the satiety of some psychological and physical purpose. It is because this project was the official duty of the Prophet (May Allah bless and greet him) and of the rightly guided caliphs after him.

(Gharab al- Qur'an, vol.4, p.31-32)

The project of enjoining the good and forbidding evil is implemented for a lofty ideal. The ideal comprises the supremacy of God's word on God's earth, the domination of God's religion, the subservience of man to God, and the emancipation from falsehood. This is a sacred ideal. If this project is carried out without sincerity, it is possible for the volunteer to feel self-satisfied, it is possible for him to receive glowing tributes in this world, but it is futile to expect any recognition and reward from God.

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